

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT: INCREASING SOCIAL
STUDIES TEACHERS' RACIAL LITERACY AND SELF-EFFICACY FOR CULTURALLY
RESPONSIVE TEACHING PRACTICES THROUGH PEER COACHING AND
INSTRUCTIONAL ROUNDS

by
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A dissertation submitted to Johns Hopkins University in conformity with the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Education

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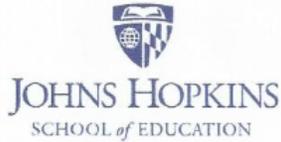
Abstract

Prior research indicates a connection between culturally responsive teaching practices and student engagement in the classroom. Color-evasive pedagogy, which can negatively impact students' understandings of content and course success, is also common in secondary social studies classrooms across the U.S. Factors contributing to color-evasive social studies pedagogy and the impact on student engagement were examined using Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. A mixed-methods needs assessment ($N = 11$) explored how high school social studies teachers understand culturally responsive pedagogy and what strategies they use to create safe classroom spaces, a strategy identified as culturally responsive and capable of increasing student engagement. Findings indicated that, although social studies teachers in this context understood the importance of incorporating culturally responsive teaching practices, there was a need for comprehensive professional development to identify specific strategies to incorporate culturally responsive practices specifically. A 5-week professional learning program utilizing peer coaching sessions and instructional round observations was designed to increase self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching practices. The program was evaluated through the collection of qualitative data, including pre- and post-interviews, audio-recordings of peer coaching sessions, and a self-report survey. Findings indicate that the professional learning program had a high-level of participant engagement and was associated with increased self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching practices in social studies classrooms. The purely qualitative data allowed for a thorough analysis and understanding of participants' experiences. Limitations and implications for future research are discussed, acknowledging a need to connect teachers' self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching practices with increased student engagement and learning.

Keywords: culturally responsive teaching practices, teacher self-efficacy, collaborative peer coaching, instructional rounds, reflection, Whiteness, racial literacy, identity awareness, teacher knowledge

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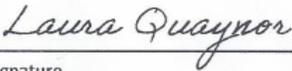
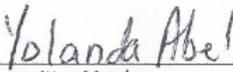
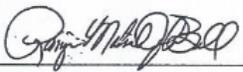
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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my family, who has supported me throughout every challenge and celebrated every success. To my parents, thank you for the unwavering support and encouragement. I am grateful for the opportunities you have provided to me and for always believing in me, even when I doubted myself. To my sister, thank you for inspiring me to pursue this challenge and motivating me through your consistent hard work and commitment to your own pursuits. To my grandmother, who has been a constant cheerleader throughout this process, thank you for always reminding me how much I have accomplished.

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Executive Summary

This study explored how to enhance social studies teachers' racial literacy and self-efficacy in order to promote culturally responsive teaching practices, thereby improving student engagement and building stronger teacher-student relationships. This qualitative study examined the effectiveness of peer coaching and instructional rounds as professional development strategies to support social studies teachers' development of racial literacy and self-efficacy. Findings from the study revealed an increase in participants' self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching practices, as evidenced by increased racial literacy skills, knowledge, identity awareness, and understanding of race and culture. Furthermore, participants reported enhanced self-efficacy in employing culturally responsive teaching practices, such as incorporating diverse materials, facilitating meaningful discussions on race, and fostering inclusive classroom environments.

Chapter 1

Color-Evasive Social Studies Pedagogy

Teachers' understanding of race and racism influences their decisions about what and how to teach in social studies classes (Hawkman, 2019; King & Chandler, 2016). In the United States, social studies teachers are insufficiently prepared to discuss race and racism in the classroom, especially regarding Whiteness and its role in social studies and education (Castagno, 2008; Curry, 2015; Picower, 2009). This lack of preparation can affect teachers' ability to create safe classroom spaces for all students, especially students of color. When students do not feel safe or respected in classrooms, they disengage to protect themselves (Chapman, 2007). Børhaug and Borgund (2017) noted that students are often motivated in social studies classes when studying content they can relate to. In social studies classes, especially those focused on the history of the United States, teachers need to address issues of race and racism, both because they are part of U.S. history, and because all students have been affected by these topics, knowingly or unknowingly. For racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically minoritized students, specifically addressing race and racism in social studies classrooms can acknowledge and draw connections with lived experiences. In social studies, student engagement in social studies classes often depends on the students' ability to connect with the content (Børhaug & Borgund, 2017; Zepke & Leach, 2010).

Numerous factors impact how teachers approach topics such as race and racism, including acknowledgment and understanding of their racial identity (Crowley & Smith, 2015; McDonough, 2009) and their critical consciousness related to social studies curriculum (Freire, 1973). Teachers' approach to these topics directly impacts all students, especially students of color, and students' comfort level engaging in discussions in the classroom, as students report

feeling that teachers who ignore diverse histories and do not directly acknowledge the role of race and racism do not prioritize their students of color (Howard, 2004). The objective of this chapter is to explain the underlying factors impacting social studies teachers' approach to the topics of race and racism within the United States. The first section details this identified problem and defines relevant key terms. The second section outlines the theoretical framework, ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994), that I will use to analyze the contributing factors to this problem. The third and final section explains individual factors organized by system level within ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994).

Statement of the Problem

The way teachers approach teaching about race and racism can lead to student disengagement in social studies classes, especially if students are unable to personally connect with the content (Chapman, 2007; Washor & Mojkowski, 2014), or if they feel their teachers do not understand the importance of discussing race and racism (Martell, 2013). Teachers' understanding of race and racism influences their decisions about what to teach and how to teach in social studies classes. Teachers' understanding of race and racism includes critical consciousness, or acknowledgment and understanding of their racial identity, as well as their beliefs and biases about other races and ethnicities. These beliefs and understandings impact teachers' abilities to create safe and engaging classroom spaces for all students, especially students who are racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically minoritized. Teachers' pedagogical choices are influenced by their understandings of their own identities, which in turn impact the ways in which teachers approach teaching racially, ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse students (Hyland, 2005). When teachers have difficulty understanding how Whiteness serves to perpetuate racial inequalities in the classrooms (Chandler, 2009; Crowley,

2016), or do not fully understand the influence of White privilege on systemic racism, there are limited opportunities for discussions in the classrooms and limited implementations of anti-racist teaching (Mosley, 2010; Vaught & Castagno, 2008). According to a 2020 U.S. Department of Education report, 79% of public-school teachers in the United States identify as White and non-Hispanic, while only seven percent of public-school teachers identify as Black and non-Hispanic (Institute of Education Sciences, 2020). The diversity of teachers in the U.S. does not reflect the diversity of students in the U.S. (Schaeffer, 2021). As social studies is not a tested subject in U.S. public schools, national-level data are not available to link student disengagement in social studies to lower academic achievement; however, students who are more engaged in their classes overall tend to have higher academic achievement (Finn & Zimmer, 2012). As the diversity of the U.S. student population continues to increase, the racial, ethnic, and cultural mismatch between students and teachers exacerbates the need for teachers to acknowledge how their identities influence their pedagogical approaches, ultimately impacting students' experiences in their classrooms (Chandler & Branscombe, 2015; Crowley & Smith, 2015; McDonough, 2009).

While some teachers understand and acknowledge the role of institutional racism and its effects on people of color within the United States, these same teachers often only address race as a social construct and are unable to successfully incorporate racial literacy into social studies curriculum (King, 2016) or do not fully understand the role of racism and therefore do not effectively address it (McDonough, 2009). In schools with large populations of students of color, students can become frustrated when they are not able to identify or see themselves in what they learn and feel that issues of race and racism are inadequately addressed (Howard, 2004; Woodson, 2015). Curricula that avoid controversial topics such as racism, genocide, and systems of power must be actively addressed to ensure that diverse histories and perspectives are

incorporated. (Gay, 2002, 2010). Bolgatz (2005) explained that many White teachers are afraid to introduce or allow conversations about race to take place in their classrooms, fearing that an examination of race could potentially result in a reinforcement of racist ideas or concepts. As a result of teachers ignoring race and racism and perpetuating a White-centered narrative of history, some students do not feel comfortable and will not participate or engage in the classroom to protect themselves from feeling vulnerable (Chapman, 2007). Students feel more comfortable engaging in conversations and participating in class when they feel that teachers are willing to engage with their students on these topics (Castagno, 2008). When teachers ignore race in their practice, they continue to perpetuate a system where power structures ignore the role that race plays in schools and students' success, directly impacting their students of color. In a student-led participatory action research study on file with school administration, students in the study context have expressed concern and discomfort with how various teachers actively ignore issues of race and racism or feel they do not adequately address those topics.

Definitions

Several terms used throughout this chapter will be defined in this section. For this research, *race* is a social construct that is utilized to categorize humans, which has influenced, and continues to influence, systems within our society based on notions of power and privilege related to race (Hyland, 2005). *Racism* refers to systems of power and oppression due to race (Hyland, 2005; King & Chandler, 2016). As noted by Bell (1992), the government policies and social norms of European settlers in the United States ingrained racism into the structure of society in the United States, perpetrated by modern institutionalized and systemic racism (Hyland, 2005). However, many people today view racism as involving only overt and blatant individual acts rather than an invisible societal and cultural construct that perpetuates racist

beliefs, ideologies, and actions (López, 2003). As overt and blatant individual acts currently violate U.S. social norms and legal codes, racism today is most present as an invisible societal and cultural construct. As noted by López (2003), “the only difference between racism today and of the past is that modern-day racism is more subtle, invisible, and insidious” (p. 82), similar to Bonilla Silva’s (2010) explanation of colorblind racism.

Additionally, the White population in the United States is often less aware of acts of racism or its presence in various systems and structures than the non-White population. As this power structure has existed for so long, Kailin (2002) stated:

Institutionalized racism and the socially constructed category of race has shaped White people’s consciousness just as surely as they have shaped people of color, but in a manner that has been largely undefined and unrecognized by Whites, who, as members of the dominant group, often take their Whiteness and the societal racial arrangement for granted. (pp. 18–19)

Concerning *racism*, *non-racism* is an approach that prioritizes passive approaches to reject extreme examples of racism. At the same time, *anti-racism* actively centers race as a social construct and acknowledges the systems of power and oppression that exist to perpetuate the institution of racism (King & Chandler, 2016).

Critical consciousness is a teacher’s ability to identify systems of power and inequality within society based on race, which inspires them to work towards dismantling those systems (Freire, 1973). Within this research, *critical consciousness* refers to teachers’ recognition and dedication to dismantling systems of oppression and racism within their classrooms. To successfully accomplish this task, White teachers must have a thorough understanding of and ability to acknowledge Whiteness as a system of oppression. *Whiteness* supports the existence of

a racial hierarchy that maintains systems of oppression, namely, racism (Aronson & Meyers, 2020). As defined by the National Museum of African American History and Culture (2021), “Whiteness and White racialized identity refer to the way that White people, their customs, culture, and beliefs operate as the standard by which all other groups are compared” (para. 3). *Whiteness* exists within education systems and society and continues the systemic oppression of people of color (Hyland, 2005). For this research, *Whiteness* affects the way White teachers de-prioritize issues such as race, racism, and White supremacy to avoid potential conflict, inadvertently upholding systems of oppression (Haviland, 2008). Some teachers cannot effectively identify Whiteness and instead promote a *colorblind* approach (Chandler & Branscombe, 2015). For this research, *colorblindness* is when teachers actively ignore seeing race to promote instead a neutral approach (Frankenberg, 1997; Galman et al., 2010; Leonardo, 2008). *Racial literacy* refers to an individual’s ability to understand and engage in conversations about race as a social construction, as well as the long-term and immediate effects of systemic racism (Sealey Ruiz & Greene, 2015). Within social studies classrooms, racial literacy is particularly important in guiding students through understanding the impacts of racism on society and individuals, as well as understand how race influences choices and decisions made by nations, societies, and individuals (King, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994) analyzes the environmental factors that influence the development of an individual, specifically in an educational context, and identifies the various systems in which these influences exist. The nested approach that Bronfenbrenner (1979) identified acknowledges the interactions between the various system levels. This research placed high school social studies students as the focal point of this

framework. In the innermost circle, the microsystem contains factors that have an immediate and direct impact on the center of the circle, which is the child. The next layer is the mesosystem which consists of interactions between the various microsystems of the child. Next, the exosystem does not contain the child specifically, but rather social structures that impact the child. The macrosystem contains cultural factors that inadvertently affect the child. Finally, the chronosystem acknowledges larger environmental, societal, and cultural changes impacting the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994, 2006).

Literature Synthesis

When applying EST to the question of color-evasive social studies pedagogy and the impact on student engagement, the chronosystem explores the influence of critical race theory and its application to education to show how racism in the U.S. continues to be perpetuated by a narrative and ideology in schools and social studies courses that ignore or under-represents non-European identities of U.S. society (Ladson-Billings, 2003). Additionally, this level explores how recent political attacks on CRT impacts social studies classrooms and how structural racism has affected desegregation efforts for schools in the United States. The macrosystem level explores the impact of Whiteness and how it perpetuates a pervasive White supremacist ideology within the social studies curriculum, ultimately impacting students within social studies classrooms. Additionally, this level explores the current political and social climate surrounding the Black Lives Matter movement, and the oppositional Blue Lives Matter response, which has created a tense and divisive environment in which to situate conversations about race and racism. The exosystem level explores how social studies curriculum and textbooks influence how teachers approach and teach about racism, impacting student engagement. No specific factors are identified at the mesosystem level, as my research does not address any interaction between the

student's microsystems. Lastly, the microsystem level explores teachers' critical consciousness and commitment toward dismantling systems of oppression and racism within their classrooms, how students perceive and engage in social studies classes, positive relationships between social studies teachers and students, and the implementation of successful teaching strategies, such as culturally relevant pedagogy.

Chronosystem

The chronosystem level of EST addresses cultural, social, and political factors that affect the current world (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994, 2006). The chronosystem factors of interest regarding social studies teachers' pedagogy are the influence of critical race theory and its application to education, how recent political attacks on CRT impact social studies classrooms, and how structural racism has impacted desegregation efforts for schools in the United States. These factors impact social studies teachers primarily; however, they also ultimately impact the students in those social studies classrooms.

Influence of Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory is a legal theory regarding the endemic nature of racism in the United States (Bell, 1992). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) applied this theory to the education system, observing racism's impact on inequities within education. Since Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) and Bell (1992), scholars have distilled CRT into six crucial tenets:

1. Race is a social construct that is not defined as biological differences but has been used to categorize humans and create systems of power and oppression that have become endemic and normalized in U.S. society (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

2. The notion of “Whiteness as property” has translated Whiteness to guarantee access to both tangible and intangible notions of property interest and power (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).
3. The role of counter-storytelling is to disrupt the mainstream narrative with perspectives from marginalized and oppressed groups (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).
4. The concept of “interest convergence” indicates that the White population only supports racial equality and justice when they receive something beneficial in return, as evidenced in civil rights legislation (Ladson-Billings, 1998).
5. A critique of liberalism incorporates notions of colorblindness and meritocracy (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).
6. The intersectionality of race with other identities, such as gender or sexuality (Crenshaw et al., 1995).

As Farag (2021) noted, the purpose of CRT is to acknowledge the influence of racial oppression throughout the history of the United States.

Attacks on CRT Influencing Social Studies Classrooms

A recent political movement to discredit and eliminate critical race theory from schools has painted critical race theory as divisive and “un-American,” which indicates a misunderstanding or level of ignorance surrounding what critical race theory truly is (George, 2021). In fact, as of June 2021, almost 80% of Americans had never heard of critical race theory (Camera, 2021). This has led to recent political debates over the role of critical race theory in public education settings.

The recent political and social context in the United States has led to debates about the role of critical race theory, particularly within public schools. Following George Floyd's murder in May of 2020, and the resulting re-emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement, there has been a discourse surrounding racism and the history of racism in the United States. This discourse has in turn impacted social studies classrooms in particular due to restrictions set by both school boards and legislation in certain states limiting teachers' abilities to acknowledge instances of racism throughout U.S. history. Teaching social studies became increasingly more politicized following George Floyd's murder, with right-leaning politicians and groups pushing to limit social studies teachers' abilities to explicitly teach about systemic racism in the United States.

However, stark differences exist between the proposed applications of critical race theory to influence school curricula and the political interpretations that have emerged. Initiated by an executive order from former President Donald Trump in September 2020 banning training that addresses diversity, racism, or bias from receipt of federal funds, conservative politicians in state and local legislatures began introducing legislation to regulate how teachers acknowledge racism, sexism, and inequality in their classrooms (*Map: Where Critical Race Theory Is Under Attack*, 2021). Many conservative right-wing politicians interpret CRT as discriminating against White people and dismantling American ideals (Sawchuk, 2021), emphasizing the role of White Supremacy in U.S. politics and culture, and increasing racial tensions (Frag, 2021). For example, the conservative think-tank Heritage Foundation released a report in March of 2021 stating that recent attempts to combat inequality have instead further divided the nation by mistakenly fixating on racism as the root cause (Rufo, 2021).

As a result of misinterpretations of CRT, many states across the U.S. have introduced legislation banning public schools from teaching about CRT and racism (Ray & Gibbons, 2021). According to the Brookings Institution, a nonprofit organization that conducts research on public policy issues, the following legislative actions related to CRT have been taken as of August 13, 2021: eight states have successfully passed anti-CRT legislation, 15 states are in the process of introducing anti-CRT legislation, and there are six proposed federal actions to ban CRT or limit teaching “divisive” concepts in public schools (Ray & Gibbons, 2021). The primary focus of much of this legislation is forbidding the “discussion, training, and/or orientation that the U.S. is inherently racist as well as any discussions about conscious and unconscious bias, privilege, discrimination, and oppression” (Ray & Gibbons, 2021, para. 5). These restrictions impact social studies classrooms as teachers may no longer be able to teach integral components of U.S. history, which limits student historical knowledge.

Race in U.S. Schools

In the almost 70 years since *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, U.S. schools have legally been desegregated; however, the reality is that segregation has permeated other aspects of society that impact education, including structural racism. According to the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, *structural racism* is defined as:

a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with “Whiteness” and disadvantages associated with “color” to endure and adapt over time. (Lawrence et al., 2004, p. 11)

Although segregation within schools was made illegal in 1954 by the Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, segregation has bled into many areas of society, including housing. The history behind biased lending practices of banks and segregation within residential areas stems from years of racist practices and structures that continue to exist today (Blaisdell, 2016). Therefore, schools end up segregated as a result of residential segregation. In the years following, urban areas have become increasingly more diverse. The teaching population was also impacted by desegregation, as new racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse teachers are often funneled into schools and districts with a similarly diverse student population (Hansen & Quintero, 2018). This practice further perpetuates Whiteness as power in education spaces (Blaisdell, 2016).

Macrosystem

The macrosystem level of EST contains cultural factors that shape the society in which this specific problem exists (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994, 2006). The macrosystem factors affecting teacher pedagogy in K–12 social studies classrooms are the political and social cultures of the United States that perpetuate elements of Whiteness and White Supremacist Ideology, especially throughout social studies curriculum. Additionally, the current political and social climate surrounding the Black Lives Matter movement and the oppositional Blue Lives Matter response has created a tense and divisive environment to situate conversations about race and racism.

Political & Social Climate

The Black Lives Matter movement founded in 2013 by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi (Howard University School of Law, 2018), emerged when George Zimmerman was acquitted of the murder of a young Black teen, Trayvon Martin (Carney, 2016; Howard,

2016). Originally calling attention to the brutal inequalities and detrimental results of systemic racism in the United States, the movement took off across social media, utilizing the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter on Twitter as it gained more attention as a recognized social justice activist movement (Carney, 2016; Howard, 2016). According to the organization's website, the main purpose of this organization is to "eradicate White supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes" (Black Lives Matter, 2023, para. 1). Following the murder of George Floyd in May 2020, protests for racial justice took place across the nation.

An oppositional counter-movement, Blue Lives Matter, first emerged in December 2014 during the investigation of police officer Darren Wilson for the murder of another black teen Michael Brown (Solomon & Martin, 2019). The main purpose of the Blue Lives Matter movement is to provide financial and public support for police officers who identify themselves as targets of the Black Lives Matter movement (Solomon & Martin, 2019; Solomon et al., 2021). This movement also utilized social media to gain attention, using the hashtags #bluelivesmatter, and more recently #alllivesmatter (Solomon & Martin, 2019). Depicting the Black Lives Matter movement as violent riots against law enforcement, Blue Lives Matter has also attempted to change the narrative to place blame for issues within the Black community onto the Black community themselves (Solomon & Martin, 2019), thus ignoring the role of structural and institutional racism in the United States. Solomon et al. (2021) found that although Blue Lives Matter cannot explicitly be defined as a White ethnonationalist movement, the movement does promote some alt-right messaging, including the distrust of the 'liberal' media, the attack on law enforcement, and equating the Black Lives Matter movement with terrorist organizations.

Whiteness and White Supremacist Ideology

Mainstream culture in the United States perpetuates and reinforces notions of Whiteness and White Supremacy within education systems. These ideas and ideals continue to exist when conversations about racism and White Supremacy are deprioritized or ignored, influenced by conscious or unconscious acts of Whiteness. For example, Chandler and Branscombe (2015) identified “White social studies,” wherein White social studies teachers reinforced notions of White Supremacy as status quo by teaching only selective race-related topics throughout history, ultimately “raceproofing” it by downplaying or ignoring controversial aspects.

The framework of critical Whiteness studies (CWS; Frankenberg, 1993) explains the effects of Whiteness as an ideology rather than a racial category, particularly within the context of social studies teachers. In this framework, *Whiteness* is identified as a source of power maintained through the ignorance or colorblindness of White people in perpetuating racial hierarchies (Crowley & Smith, 2015; Frankenberg, 1993). Within the realm of education, Whiteness is held up by teachers who remain silent in conversations about race and racism (Ladson-Billings, 1995), evade conversations about race (Segall & Garrett, 2013), or espouse “exceptions to the rule” to downplay or discredit structural racism (Leonardo, 2008). As stated by Picower (2009), “Whiteness is the ideology and way of being in the world that is used to maintain White supremacy” (p. 198). Picower’s (2009) qualitative study of eight White, female preservice teachers sought to understand how these preservice teachers understand racial differences and how these understandings contributed to maintaining racial hierarchies and could impact racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse students. Picower (2009) found the system of White supremacy is upheld through the continuation of unacknowledged White privilege and teacher education programs that do not adequately prepare White teachers to

appropriately serve diverse student populations. In this instance, Whiteness is enacted through White teachers' ignorance of their privilege and perpetuation of racial hierarchies.

Exosystem

The exosystem level of EST contains social structures that indirectly affect student experiences in social studies classrooms (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994, 2006). Exosystem factors include social studies curriculum and textbooks, and their influence on teacher pedagogy. Teacher preparation programs also influence teachers' understanding and approach to incorporating specific topics in their classrooms. Additionally, the sociopolitical context at the local, state, and national level influence policy initiatives, which ultimately affect teachers' pedagogical choices surrounding how they address controversial topics.

Social Studies Curriculum & Textbooks

Textbooks and resources used within social studies classrooms often present limited and incomplete information about race and racism (Brown & Brown, 2010; Crowley & Smith, 2015), which can in turn cause teachers to feel uncomfortable discussing those topics with their students (Epstein et al., 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2003). Students then may feel that issues of race and racism are inadequately addressed (Howard, 2004; Woodson, 2015), or lead to incorrect understandings of race and racism as individual and isolated incidents, rather than products of systemic and institutionalized racism (Brown & Brown, 2010). As noted by Ladson-Billings (2003):

The official curricula only serves to reinforce what the societal curriculum suggests, i.e., people of color are relatively insignificant to the growth and development of our democracy and our nation and they represent a drain on the resources and values. (p. 4)

This ineffective acknowledgment of race and racism negatively impacts students, particularly students of color, when they cannot relate to or identify with the content taught.

While teachers have a certain amount of autonomy over how they teach in their classrooms, they must adhere to the required state and content curriculum. When the curricula and textbooks adhere to a narrative of Whiteness, textbook content can impact teacher's pedagogical decisions as teachers may find it difficult to teach anything that contradicts these resources. As a whole, curricula in the United States tend to promote a White, Euro-centric narrative that fails to incorporate the voices of marginalized groups (Dozono, 2020; Flynn, 2015), referred to as the "discourse of invisibility" by Ladson-Billings (2003, p. 4). All students, but especially racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse students, are negatively impacted by the pervasive ideology of Whiteness and White Supremacy found in social studies curriculum and textbooks. One way in which students are negatively impacted is through what Dozono (2020) refers to as "epistemic violence," or the result of teacher emphasis of traditional White, Eurocentric narratives that are prioritized in the textbooks as the main perspective, erasing other voices and perspectives from history. For example, in many textbooks used in U.S. history courses, racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse histories are often left out of the main narrative, but rather featured on the side of the page or at the end of a section (Ladson-Billings, 2003; Khan, 2021). This selective insertion of stories impacts social studies teachers by limiting the narrative of the history of the United States to one of a "raceless" foundation of this nation, or one that seriously under acknowledges the role that race and racism have impacted the history of this nation (Chandler, 2009; Chandler & Branscombe, 2015). As a result, textbooks present racism as confined to specific time periods or specific moments in

history, rather than acknowledging the systemic nature of racism that has shaped this nation (Chandler, 2009; Chandler & Branscombe, 2015).

Additionally, even if teachers feel comfortable teaching about race and racism in their social studies classrooms, it can be difficult for teachers to break out of the structure of Whiteness that has been embedded in social studies curriculum and resources (Martell & Stevens, 2017). In a study conducted to analyze how social studies textbooks addressed racial violence against African Americans, Brown and Brown (2010) found that racial violence against African Americans was depicted as isolated and individual incidents rather than evidence of systemic and institutionalized racism. In addressing the question of why social studies textbooks inadequately address issues of race and racism, Brown and Brown (2010) acknowledge the role of politics in determining school curricula. In a similar study of social studies curricula, Woodson (2015) found that master narratives perpetuated White Supremacy by silencing counterstories of marginalized groups. Counterstories are an essential element of critical race theory that helps students understand how racism has and continues to affect people of color (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Woodson, 2015). The “master narrative” referenced by Woodson (2015) defines how social studies education inaccurately represents race and racism throughout history. These master narratives reinforce White Supremacy by generalizing Black people and their experiences, depicting racism as isolated and accidental incidents, isolating Black activists as martyrs or messiahs, and claiming that the civil rights movement eliminated racism (Woodson, 2015).

These examples highlight how students are negatively impacted by social studies curricula and textbooks promoting a White Supremacist ideology. Therefore, to acknowledge diverse histories and narratives in social studies classes, teachers need to move away from

relying heavily on textbooks as their primary source of information and need to incorporate other diverse sources to give students a more well-rounded version of historical events (Alridge, 2006). If the materials provided for teachers to use within their classrooms do not adequately or appropriately acknowledge the role that racism has played throughout our history, this inaccuracy certainly affects the decisions that teachers make when determining how, or if, to approach conversations about race and racism.

Teacher Preparation

Although teachers may feel as though they adequately address race in their classrooms, the ways in which they do so vary. This variance is partially a result of teacher education programs providing limited preparation for social studies teachers to develop competencies to discuss race (Crowley & Smith, 2015; King, 2016; McDonough, 2009). The issue is not that teachers lack the ability to discuss race, but that they actively choose to take a “non-racist” approach (Chandler & Branscombe, 2015; Garrett & Segall, 2013; King & Chandler, 2016) and implement silence as a mechanism to protect the White racial code present in social studies (Chandler & Branscombe, 2015; King & Chandler, 2016). One way of taking this “non-racist” approach promotes a colorblind mentality that avoids racial language (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Lensmire, 2010).

Sociopolitical Context Influences on Policy and Pedagogy

Within the classroom, teachers face increasing external pressure surrounding how to teach. Dunn et al. (2019) explored how context influences teachers’ pedagogical choices immediately following the 2016 presidential election. Citing Nieto and Bode’s (1998) definition of sociopolitical context, Dunn et al. reemphasized that teachers’ pedagogical choices do not occur in a vacuum but are reflective of the societal and political forces of the local, state, and

national contexts. As Dunn et al. noted, those sociopolitical contexts influence the curriculum and standards at the local, state, and national level, and can limit teachers' pedagogical choices and individual agency within their classrooms. Dunn et al. found that teachers' pedagogical choices immediately following the 2016 election were heavily influenced by specific sociopolitical contexts including: perceptions of parental beliefs, support or pressure from their administration, and specific policies that restricted teachers' pedagogical choices.

Social studies departments are often the de facto space for controversial topics within curriculum. Geller (2020) explored how social studies teachers navigate how to introduce and discuss controversial topics in their classrooms without appearing to inject political bias and indoctrination. The fair discussion of controversial issues has become increasingly more relevant in the current political climate following the 2016 presidential election. As Dunn et al. (2019) explained, new policies created in the wake of the 2016 election have created "political trauma" (p. 446) for many teachers across the United States. Geller's qualitative study specifically focused on social studies teachers' understandings of political disclosures in their classrooms and how this shifted after the 2016 election and found that the majority of participants made a point to hide their political beliefs in the classroom by claiming political neutrality in the classroom, even though Geller identified claiming neutrality as political balance. Several participants in this study also discussed being scolded by administrators for appearing too politically-biased (Geller, 2020), which pushed teachers to further hide their political beliefs. However, research indicates that students benefit from discussing politically "controversial" topics in their social studies classrooms; these benefits include increased engagement in the classroom, increased tolerance and knowledge of diversity, and increased skills such as speaking, critical thinking, and civic deliberation (Avery et al., 2013; Hess, 2009; Maurissen et al., 2018).

Microsystem

The microsystem level of EST contains factors that directly affect teacher pedagogy in social studies classrooms (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994, 2006). Although each factor specifically focuses on teachers, the focal point is how each factor impacts students within those teachers' classrooms. These factors include teachers' critical consciousness, awareness of White racial identities, relationships between social studies teachers and students, and experience with culturally relevant pedagogy.

Teacher Critical Consciousness

How teachers, particularly White teachers, view their own identity influences how they approach discussing race and racism in their classrooms. Freire (1973) identified three elements to the cycle of critical consciousness: critical analysis of the systems in place that perpetuate an injustice of inequality, a sense of agency to gain the power or ability to take action, and commitment to take critical action against those injustices. The first step in engaging with critical consciousness requires teachers to understand their racial identity and reflect on how that affects how they teach (Crowley & Smith, 2015). Teachers who have a high level of racial and critical consciousness understand that society is racialized and that their racial identity influences how they perceive the world; they will be more likely to view racism as a systemic issue that needs to be addressed by challenging cultural norms and identifying elements of society that have perpetuated racism and White supremacy (Haynes, 2017). Teachers' willingness to engage in conversations about race and racism directly relates to their comfort level in discussing race, as well as their level of racial consciousness (Galman et al., 2010; Haynes, 2017; Leonardo, 2008). For this research, teachers' understandings of race, racism, and Whiteness will be considered an element of critical consciousness.

Resources provided for social studies teachers can influence teachers' knowledge and biases, especially their racial pedagogical content knowledge (Chandler, 2015). Racial pedagogical content knowledge refers to teachers' racial knowledge and knowledge regarding pedagogies that support student development and understanding. In addition to an understanding of race, racism, and Whiteness, teachers' critical consciousness influences how they decide how to teach about those topics and what they include or actively ignore (McDonough, 2009). When teachers have difficulty understanding the role of Whiteness in perpetuating racial inequality in the classroom due to their own personal and lived experiences, it can limit their ability to understand the importance of allowing classroom discussions about race to occur (Chandler, 2009; Crowley, 2016).

Awareness of White Racial Identities

Individual teachers' decisions about what resources to utilize and what to teach about could be based on their own biases. White teachers are subject to unconsciously, or even consciously, bringing their beliefs and biases into their classrooms (Aronson & Meyers, 2020). To actively work to acknowledge and reduce biases that influence student learning, teachers need to be aware of their own identities and personal experiences that influence their biases (Lintner, 2004). Teachers' ability to first reflect on their own identity to understand how their life experiences might differ from the experiences of their students is a first step in the successful implementation of culturally responsive strategies (Gay, 2002, 2010).

Additionally, teachers may have different understandings of how to approach acknowledging racism, which then influences their pedagogical decisions. King and Chandler (2016) identified the differences between non-racism and anti-racism in curriculum and pedagogy. While some White teachers understand and acknowledge the role of institutional

racism and the experiences of people of color, they may not possess the skills to address those factors appropriately and feel uncomfortable explicitly addressing them (King, 2016; McDonough, 2009). McDonough (2009) conducted an ethnographic study to determine how teachers perform critical consciousness in their classrooms. This research included recognizing inequality, injustice, and forms of oppression, allowing space for students to engage and find their voices, and helping students determine how they can take action, all of which are essential elements of the critical consciousness cycle. After months of observation and several interviews with the participating teacher, McDonough found that while the teacher seemed open to and comfortable with discussing issues related to race, the significance of those conversations was not fully understood. This teacher seemed to understand institutional and systemic racism but had limited knowledge about how this impacted their school, classroom, and students. As a result, this teacher inadvertently approached issues of racism as something that happened in the past, not fully acknowledging that racism still actively exists (McDonough, 2009). Critical consciousness involves an awareness of present-day instances of racism. A case study conducted to analyze how three White high school social studies teachers in the same school in the southern United States teach about race found that all three teachers mentioned race but did not actively acknowledge instances of racism in their instruction (Chandler & Branscombe, 2015). These teachers engaged in what the researchers termed “White Social Studies” by promoting Whiteness and White Supremacist ideologies through perpetuating dominant White narratives of traditional U.S. history and consciously choosing to make race invisible or downplaying its relevance (Chandler & Branscombe, 2015).

Although the approach may be well-intentioned, some teachers implement a colorblind approach to discussing race and racism in their classrooms (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). This approach

could stem from teachers' lack of awareness about their White racial identities (Crowley & Smith, 2015), or their implicit bias or surface-level understandings of race and racism (Aronson & Meyers, 2020; Leonardo & Grubb, 2014). The colorblind approach impacts teachers' critical consciousness by limiting their ability to recognize the presence of factors related to systemic racism. In understanding the role of White racial knowledge (Leonardo, 2008), teachers often silence conversations about race and revert to White comfort (Galman et al., 2010) by actively disengaging when conversations about race appear. By remaining silent during these conversations about race, White teachers appear to be adhering to the notion that because they are White, they have limited knowledge about racial issues; however, this potentially de-prioritizes issues of racism and promotes a colorblind position that removes race from the discussion in an attempt to appear neutral (Galman et al., 2010; Leonardo, 2008).

Perceptions of Student-Teacher Relationships

Student-teacher relationships are essential for student engagement and success in the classroom (Pianta et al., 2012). Following Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism, there is a relationship between cognitive development and social interactions, and teachers can thus support student cognitive development by creating positive and authentic relationships with students to best support them in the classroom (Franklin & Harrington, 2019). Student-teacher relationships are crucial for student success; students of color are more likely to describe a positive relationship with a social studies teacher if they feel this teacher appropriately addresses and incorporates issues related to race and racism than if they feel the teacher does not (Howard, 2004). However, many students of color feel that their teachers view or treat them differently than White students because of their racial or ethnic identities (Pringle et. al, 2010). Therefore,

perceived different or lower teacher expectations can lead to lower levels of student engagement for students of color (Andrews & Gutwein, 2017).

According to a 2020 U.S. Department of Education report, 79% of public-school teachers in the United States identify as White and non-Hispanic, while only 7% of public-school teachers identified as Black and non-Hispanic (Institute of Education Sciences, 2020). Although the teaching population in the United States is becoming slightly more racially and ethnically diverse (Institute of Education Sciences, 2020), the student population is becoming increasingly more diverse (*Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups 2018*, 2019). The U.S. Census Bureau projects that the population of the U.S. will become significantly more diverse over the next 45 years with a projected 115% increase in the population of people identifying as Hispanic/Latino, and a projected 225% increase in the population of people identifying as bi- or multi-racial (Colby & Ortman, 2015). Therefore, there is a clear disconnect between a predominately White teaching population and an increasingly diverse population of students.

Student-teacher relationships are affected by students' interpretations of teachers' perceptions of them. In a qualitative study of 48 African American students across two high schools designed to understand how teacher expectations impact the academic success of African American high school students and the student's perception of how their teachers viewed them, Pringle et al. (2010) found that more than half of the African American participants felt that the way their teachers viewed them was strongly influenced by their race or ethnicity. Additionally, many participants felt that their teachers lowered expectations for African American students instead of White students. The findings of this study indicate the relationship between teacher expectations for students and students' academic success influences student-teacher relationships, which are integral in helping students of color feel that they belong in classrooms and that their

teachers care about them (Pringle et al., 2010). If students perceive that their teachers discriminate against them due to their racial or ethnic identity, they will be more likely to disengage in the classroom which limits their academic success.

Teachers' perceptions of their students are a significant component of teacher-student relationships. In a study of approximately 18,500 students conducted by McGrady and Reynolds (2013) reviewing data from the educational longitudinal study collected by the National Center for Education Statistics regarding the effects of cultural mismatch between students and teachers, White teachers tended to view their Black students more negatively than they viewed their non-Black students. Using Bourdieu's (1973) theory of cultural capital as a lens, this mismatch between White teachers and diverse students can contribute to negative interactions in the classroom and limit academic success (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). One reason for this mismatch could result from White teachers' conscious or unconscious biases and beliefs in racial stereotypes (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). If students feel that a teacher has lower expectations due to their racial identity, they will be more likely to disengage from that class (Andrews & Gutwein, 2017; Friend & Caruthers, 2012; Pringle et al., 2010). Although there is not much research to indicate that teacher bias and perceptions of non-White students directly impact students' academic outcomes, those perceptions may exacerbate systemic racism within schools (Cherng, 2017).

Teacher Practices

Classrooms can feel safe for all students of all ethnicities, races, or cultural identities through the use of culturally responsive teaching practices. Culturally responsive teaching emerged as one way to address the needs of diverse learners by incorporating their cultural identities (Gay, 2010), as outlined by the theoretical model of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

(Ladson-Billings, 1995). For this research, *culturally responsive teaching* emphasizes and identifies connections between culturally and ethnically diverse students' personal lives and experiences outside of school with the content and skills learned inside the school setting (Gay, 2010). To successfully incorporate culturally responsive practices, teachers must explicitly acknowledge and account for cultural diversity and incorporate multicultural strategies (Gay, 2010). Research has found positive student impacts surrounding identity development and increased academic success as a result of culturally responsive practices (Byrd, 2016; Howard & Terry, 2011). Additionally, the beliefs and interpretations of their role as culturally responsive teachers affect how they view the role of students in the classroom (Franklin & Harrington, 2019). To successfully help students develop critical skills in the classroom, teachers can acknowledge and incorporate students' cultural knowledge and experiences to develop their cultural competence and allow students to apply these skills to the real world (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Culturally responsive teaching builds on that model to actively work towards eliminating barriers in the classroom for all students, especially students of color.

Teachers' abilities to incorporate culturally responsive teaching is impacted by their self-efficacy in their ability to do so. As explained by Bandura (1977), self-efficacy influences an individual's behavior based on their belief in their ability to produce a desired outcome. There are four sources related to self-efficacy: performance accomplishments, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal (Bandura, 1977). Performance accomplishments includes an individual's previous accomplishments and successes, contributing to higher outcome expectations. Vicarious experiences, often referred to as modeling, relies on learning through observation of others performance of skill. Verbal persuasion can increase confidence in an individual's belief in their ability to accomplish or perform. Finally, emotional arousal,

sometimes referred to as emotional state, considers the emotional state an individual is in to determine their level of confidence in their ability.

Unfortunately, limited research exists on teachers' self-efficacy for implementing culturally responsive teaching practices. For example, in a 2019 study examining teachers' ($N = 245$) self-efficacy for implementing culturally responsive teaching practices, Cruz et al. found that most teachers felt confident implementing aspects of culturally responsive teaching specifically related to curriculum and instruction, and in their ability to develop relationships with their students and building trust. Two instruments related to examining culturally responsive self-efficacy have been developed to further guide research related to self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching practices: the culturally responsive classroom management self-efficacy scale (CRCMSE; Siwatu et al., 2017) and the culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy scale (Siwatu, 2007). Both instruments were used in the needs assessment study to determine participants self-efficacy for teaching practices related to culturally responsive teaching.

Racial literacy is one aspect of culturally responsive teaching that requires teachers to guide students through conversations about the existence and impacts of system racism, examine race as a social construct, and discuss examples of racism and race throughout history (King, 2016). Referring to the definition of culturally responsive teaching identified above, racial literacy supports teachers' acknowledgement and incorporation of connecting students' experiences with content. This specific acknowledgement of the existence of race, systemic racism, and the impacts on individuals and society allow students to understand the institutionalized system of racism (Sealey Ruiz & Greene, 2015). Teachers who identify as "racially literate" are able to acknowledge systems of oppression within the system of education, their curriculum, and even their classrooms, as well as their own perceived biases about their

students (Sealey Ruiz & Greene, 2015). Additionally, incorporating racial literacy in social studies classrooms can provide students with tools to challenge curriculum and content that ignores the voices and perspectives of diverse groups and promotes a Whiteness narrative instead (An, 2020).

Conclusion

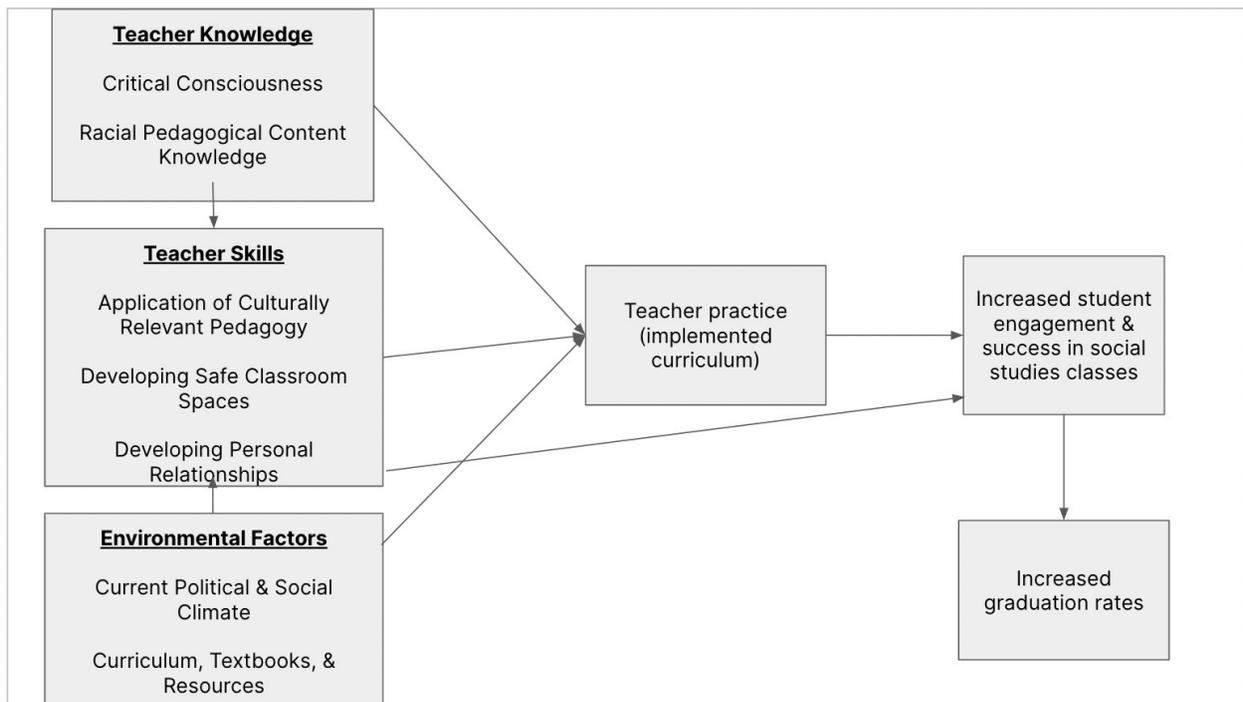
Although many of these factors focus on aspects impacting social studies teachers, students in those social studies classrooms are at the center of Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1994) ecological systems theory. In seeking to understand the effect of social studies teachers' race-explicit pedagogy as opposed to colorblind pedagogy (López, 2003), the factors explored above provide necessary information to understand the significance of this problem. How teachers understand race, racism, and Whiteness influences their critical consciousness (Freire, 1973) and how they decide how to teach about race-related topics and what they include or actively ignore. The decisions teachers make regarding how to address race and racism affect their students (Hyland, 2005). Teachers need to understand how Whiteness and White Supremacy are ingrained in social studies curriculum (Chandler, 2009; Crowley, 2016); otherwise, they will be limited in their ability to incorporate anti-racist teaching or lead discussions about race and racism in their classrooms (Mosley, 2010; Vaught & Castagno, 2008).

Additionally, outside factors such as curriculum, resources, and teacher preparation influence what teachers address in their classrooms, particularly the representation of topics related to race and racism. The resources and textbooks used in social studies classrooms do not always provide adequate information about race and racism (Brown & Brown, 2010; Crowley & Smith, 2015). Additionally, social studies teacher preparation programs are limited in their ability to guide White preservice teachers through analyzing their identity and the role of

Whiteness (Crowley & Smith, 2015; McDonough, 2009). Lastly, the influence of critical race theory and its application to education, how recent political attacks on CRT impacts social studies classrooms, and how structural racism has impacted desegregation efforts for schools in the United States help contextualize the existence of my problem in its current state. The interaction between these factors and their impact on overall student engagement in social studies classes is depicted in Figure 1.1 below.

Figure 1.1

Concept Map of Factors Affecting Student Engagement in Social Studies Classes



In order to understand how this problem manifests in my context, I collected data related to teachers’ understandings of culturally responsive teaching and strategies currently utilized in their practice. The needs assessment involved a mixed-methods approach including quantitative data collected through a survey questionnaire, and qualitative data collected through follow-up interviews to allow participants to expand on their understandings of topics addressed in the

survey. I also analyzed de-identified secondary data previously collected by a student organization within my context, Youth in Action, to gain insight from the student population about how students perceive and experience racial and cultural inclusivity of their teachers. The overall purpose of this study is to understand how high school social studies teachers understand the concept of safe spaces within their classrooms, how they incorporate culturally responsive teaching strategies to create those safe spaces, and how students experience those spaces.

Chapter 2

Needs Assessment

The way teachers approach teaching about race and racism can lead to student disengagement in social studies classes. Teachers in current U.S. social studies courses, particularly courses focused on the history of the United States, tend to focus on a White-centered narrative, largely ignoring the histories of racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse groups within the United States (Dozono, 2020; Flynn, 2015), leading students to become frustrated when they are not able to identify or see themselves in what they learn (Epstein, 2000; Howard, 2004). Depending on teachers' cultural responsiveness and knowledge and understanding of race, racism, and related topics, Bolgatz (2005) explained that some White teachers are afraid to introduce or allow conversations about race to take place in their classrooms out of fear that an examination of race could potentially result in a reinforcement of racist ideas or concepts. Teachers' decisions regarding addressing race and racism affect their students (Hyland, 2005).

If teachers ignore race in their practice, they perpetuate a system where power structures ignore the role that race plays in schools and student's academic success. If students feel that their teachers avoid discussing race and racism in social studies classes (Howard, 2004; Woodson, 2015), they may disengage. Although there could be various reasons contributing to student discomfort in classrooms, teachers' omission of the topics of race and racism contributes to student discomfort (Chapman, 2013; Howard, 2004). Students feel more comfortable engaging in conversations and participating in class when they think that teachers are willing to engage with their students on these topics (Castagno, 2008).

This problem of practice sought to address social studies engagement for racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse students by examining teachers' culturally responsive pedagogy related to teaching about race and racism, specifically color-evasive social studies pedagogy. For this research, *color-evasive social studies pedagogy* indicates language and teaching strategies that actively avoid color-specific language or promote a colorblind discourse (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). Racial identity, beliefs, and biases contribute to teachers' decisions on approaching topics of race and racism in social studies courses. These factors directly impact all students, especially racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse students, and their comfort level engaging in discussions in the classroom, as students feel that teachers who ignore diverse histories and do not directly acknowledge the role of race and racism are not actively creating a safe space in the classroom (Gayle et al., 2013).

Statement of the Purpose

This study aimed to explore how high school social studies teachers understand culturally responsive pedagogy and what strategies they use to create safe classroom spaces. This study took place in a mid-size public high school's social studies department in central New Jersey. This mixed-methods study included qualitative and quantitative data relating to multiple factors influencing student social studies engagement to determine how these factors play out in the focus context. These data contained teacher survey responses to several instruments, including (a) safe spaces within classrooms (Holley & Steiner, 2005), (b) self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching strategies (Siwatu, 2007), (c) self-efficacy for practices to promote a safe and culturally responsive environment (Oyerinde, 2008), and (d) how teachers' beliefs around how culturally responsive teaching affect their students (Siwatu, 2007; Siwatu et al., 2017).

Following this survey, qualitative data collected via interviews with individual teachers allowed them to elaborate on how they create safe spaces in their classrooms, how they view their role as social studies teachers in addressing issues of race and racism in their classrooms, and how they incorporate culturally responsive practices.

Additionally, de-identified secondary data previously collected by a student organization within my context, Youth in Action, were analyzed to gain insight from the student population about how students perceive and experience racial and cultural inclusivity of their teachers.

Methods

Research Questions

To examine teacher practices contributing to student engagement in social studies classes, the following research questions were developed for this needs assessment. Table 2.1 aligns each research question with the data collection instrument that provided data for that specific topic.

Table 2.1

Alignment of Research Questions With Data Collection Instruments

Research question	Data collection instrument
RQ1: How do students perceive racial and cultural inclusivity from teachers in this context?	Secondary, de-identified student data
RQ2: How do teachers create safe spaces for students?	Classroom environment subsection of the Safe Spaces Questionnaire (Holley & Steiner, 2005), Interview
RQ3: What are teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching practices in their classrooms?	Select items from Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale (CRTSE; Siwatu, 2007), select items from Culturally Responsive Classroom Management Self-Efficacy Scale (CRCMSE; Siwatu et al., 2015), Interview
RQ4: What instructional strategies do teachers use to incorporate culturally responsive pedagogy/teaching?	CRCMSE (Siwatu et al., 2017), Culturally Responsive Teaching Techniques Scale (Oyerinde, 2008), Interview

The results of the quantitative survey questionnaire and qualitative follow-up interviews were analyzed and coded to answer all four research questions.

Participants

The sample used to investigate these research questions include high school social studies teachers in my context. I asked for volunteers to participate in my research by completing a survey and follow-up individual interviews. The population of high school social studies teachers includes 24 individuals who teach either United States History I, United States History II, or World History courses of varying levels. Of those 24 individuals, eight identify as female, and 16 identify as male. Nineteen self-identify as White, and five self-identify as Black. To recruit participants, I introduced my study at the end of a department meeting where I specifically outlined the purpose of my research and the components of the study; once I had participants respond via email, I explicitly stated that all participation is voluntary and that participants may choose to drop out at any time. The participants interviewed were made aware that all information would remain anonymous. Participants were required to sign an Informed Consent form to participate.

Measures or Instrumentation

This study utilized the following measures to collect data: a survey distributed among social studies teachers in the context, individual follow-up interviews with several teachers who completed the survey, and secondary, de-identified data previously collected by a student organization within the context. The survey questionnaire, available in its entirety in Appendix A measured several constructs related to social studies teachers' self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching and classroom management, as well as their perceptions about safe classroom spaces. Table 2.2 includes the operational definitions and measures for each construct

addressed in the needs assessment study. The data collection instruments used for this research were a survey questionnaire including the following instruments: the classroom environment subsection of the Safe Spaces Questionnaire (Holley & Steiner, 2005), Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale (Siwatu, 2007), Culturally Responsive Classroom Management Self-Efficacy Scale (Siwatu et al., 2017), and Culturally Responsive Teaching Techniques Scale (Oyerinde, 2008). Following completion of the survey questionnaire, several participants volunteered to participate in individual follow-up interviews, which allowed participants to elaborate on their understanding and implementation of safe classroom spaces and culturally responsive teaching; these interviews also allowed participants to elaborate on their position of the role of social studies teachers in addressing topics of race and racism in the classroom.

Table 2.2*Needs Assessment Constructs, Operational Definitions, and Instrument/Measures*

Construct	Operational definition	Instrument/measure
Safe Spaces	“classroom climate that allows students to feel secure enough to take risks, honestly express their views and share and explore their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors” (Holley & Steiner, 2005, p. 50)	Importance of Classroom Environment section of Holley, and Steiner (2005) Safe Classroom Space Questionnaire; Follow-Up Interview
Teachers’ Perceptions of Self-Efficacy	How teachers perceive their ability to impact students’ experiences in the classroom (Bandura, 1997)	Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale (CRTSE; Siwatu, 2007) Culturally Responsive Classroom Management Self-Efficacy Scale (CRCMSE; Siwatu et al., 2017)
Culturally-Responsive Teaching	“using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively” (Gay, 2002, p. 106)	Culturally Responsive Teaching Techniques Scale (CRTTS; Oyerinde, 2008); Follow-Up Interviews
Instructional Strategies	“implementation of equitable and culturally sensitive instructional practices” (Siwatu, 2007, p. 1086)	Culturally Responsive Teaching Outcome Expectancy (CRTOE; Siwatu, 2007); Follow-Up Interviews

Demographic Information

The first section of the survey questionnaire obtained basic demographic information from the participants, including the grade level they primarily teach, years of teaching experience, how many years they have been teaching in this specific school or district, and how they racially or ethnically identify. This information allowed me to observe any possible trends

in responses based on racial or ethnic identity, years of teaching experience, or any other relevant information.

Safe Classroom Spaces

To understand how teachers create safe spaces for students within the classroom, the Importance of Classroom Environment subsection of the Safe Spaces Questionnaire (Holley & Steiner, 2005) was included in the survey questionnaire to analyze how teachers understand the significance of safe spaces within the classroom. Holley and Steiner (2005) noted that *safe space* in the classroom can be defined as a space where students feel comfortable expressing their opinions and beliefs, sharing their experiences, challenging themselves, and learning from their peers. If students feel safe in a classroom, they are more likely to engage and will likely learn more (Boostrom, 1998; Gayle et al., 2013). The Safe Spaces Questionnaire (Holley & Steiner, 2005) was initially developed to understand how students in social work programs understand the significance of classrooms being identified as safe spaces, and how that impacts an individual's ability to learn in that space. Although this questionnaire was not used in a social work program context, it illuminated how teachers understand safe spaces. Participants completed the Importance of Classroom Environment sub-section, which consisted of seven items asking them to reflect on their experiences of feeling safe or unsafe in classrooms and gauge their understanding of how significant safe classroom spaces are to learning.

Culturally Responsive Teaching & Perceptions of Self-Efficacy. To understand teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy for cultural responsiveness, specifically related to addressing race and racism in their classrooms, participants completed the Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale (Siwatu, 2007), Culturally Responsive Classroom Management Self-Efficacy Scale (Siwatu et al., 2017), and Culturally Responsive Teaching Techniques Scale

(Oyerinde, 2008). For the purpose of this research, *culturally responsive teaching* means emphasizing and connections between culturally and ethnically diverse students' personal lives and experiences outside of school with the content and skills learned inside the school setting (Gay, 2010); this ultimately helps students develop critical skills in the classroom to develop their cultural competence and allow students to apply these skills to the real world (Ladson-Billings, 1995). As several of the instruments included in the survey examined the role of self-efficacy beliefs related to culturally responsive teaching, it is also important to define self-efficacy. For the purpose of this research, *self-efficacy* is defined as a teacher's belief in their ability to perform certain actions or behaviors to achieve specific goals (Bandura, 1977). Specifically related to this research, self-efficacy was measured concerning teachers' confidence in their ability to implement culturally responsive teaching strategies to achieve desired results, specifically focusing on self-efficacy related to addressing issues of race and racism. The constructs of culturally responsive teaching and self-efficacy are connected in each of these instruments.

To analyze how teachers implement culturally responsive teaching techniques in their current practice, participants completed the Culturally Responsive Teaching Techniques Scale (CRTTS; Oyerinde, 2008). The instrument was created because of the observable gap in existing measures of teacher efficacy that specifically measure culturally responsive teaching techniques (Oyerinde, 2008). This instrument includes five items that ask participants to identify on a Likert scale how often they incorporate culturally responsive teaching techniques, one item that asks how often they incorporate various instructional methods, and one item about how various factors affect teachers' efficacy. This instrument was specifically used to measure culturally responsive teaching techniques. Oyerinde (2008) found a direct correlation between teacher

efficacy and culturally responsive teaching techniques through data collection across four public middle schools.

The Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale (CRTSE; Siwatu, 2007) was initially created for a study of 275 preservice teachers to determine the relationship between preservice teachers' self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching and their outcome expectancy for specific tasks related to culturally responsive teaching, such as developing a community of learners when a class consists of students from diverse backgrounds and critically examining the curriculum to determine whether it reinforces negative cultural stereotypes (Siwatu, 2007). The scale consists of 40 Likert-type items that ask participants to rate on a scale from 0 to 100 their confidence in their ability to incorporate various culturally responsive teaching strategies (Siwatu, 2007).

The Culturally Responsive Classroom Management Self-Efficacy Scale (CRCMSE; Siwatu et al., 2017) was created for a study that analyzed teachers' self-efficacy beliefs about classroom management strategies that are associated with successful culturally responsive teachers. The scale consists of 35 items related to culturally responsive classroom management that participants are asked to rank on a scale from 0 to 100 based on how confident they feel they can implement those tasks. Examples of statement items include: "create a learning environment that conveys respect for the cultures of all students in my classroom," "use what I know about my students' cultural background to develop an effective learning environment," and "use my knowledge of students' cultural backgrounds to create a culturally compatible learning environment" (Siwatu et al., 2017). This instrument was used to determine teachers' self-efficacy beliefs regarding specific culturally responsive classroom management tasks and whether teacher

beliefs in their ability to incorporate those culturally responsive strategies led to increased effective classroom management (Siwatu et al., 2017).

Follow-Up Interviews

After participants completed the survey questionnaire, I asked for volunteers to participate in individual follow-up interviews. Seven teachers volunteered to participate in these interviews. These follow-up interviews focused on how teachers understand and approach creating safe classroom spaces, the role of social studies in addressing issues of race and racism, and how teachers understand and incorporate culturally responsive teaching in their practice. These interviews were conducted via Zoom and audio-recorded with each participant's consent. These questions allowed teachers to elaborate or provide specific examples on the topics addressed in the survey questionnaire.

Procedure

This mixed-methods study collected data through de-identified secondary data, survey questionnaires, and follow-up interviews with voluntary participants. Each data collection instrument specifically gathered data for one or more of the research questions described above. Quantitative data were analyzed through SPSS while qualitative data were coded and analyzed by theme.

Data Collection

As this needs assessment study consists of mixed methods, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected through secondary data, a survey questionnaire, and follow-up interviews. The previously collected and de-identified secondary data were uploaded into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to analyze the quantitative data while the qualitative data were coded and organized according to themes. Participants completed the

survey questionnaire through Qualtrics for the first phase of data collection, and the results from the survey questionnaire were also uploaded into SPSS to analyze the quantitative data, while the qualitative data were coded and organized according to themes. The second data collection phase consisted of individual interviews, lasting approximately 15–20 minutes, conducted via Zoom and audio-recorded. The interview protocol (see Appendix B) outlined the purpose of the study, enabled obtaining consent from the participant, and explained that all interviews would be conducted via Zoom and audio-recorded.

Secondary Data

Previously collected and de-identified secondary data were incorporated to understand how students perceive and experience prejudice and cultural inclusivity in this context. This survey was created in 2018 by students in this context who were members of the organization Youth in Action, under the umbrella of Youth Participatory Action Research, as they sought to understand how students perceived and experienced racial prejudice and cultural inclusivity from their peers, teachers, and administrators in this specific context. These data helped provide insight into how students in the context perceive feeling safe in this context, which could be compared with teachers' self-efficacy for creating safe spaces in their classrooms. The questions included general demographic information and questions asking if and how the participants experienced prejudice within the school, from whom the prejudice originated, how the students perceived racial representation within the school, and if the participant felt that the school actively worked to prevent prejudice and discrimination. Once data were collected from 133 student participants, the student members of this organization presented their findings to all faculty during a building faculty meeting and the Board of Education during a district-wide meeting.

Qualtrics Survey

The first phase of data collection consisted of a survey questionnaire consisting of 93 items that was distributed via Qualtrics and uploaded into SPSS to be analyzed. Consent was obtained from participants prior to survey administration. The survey consisted of four demographic items, seven items from the Safe Space Questionnaire (Holley & Steiner, 2005), four items from the Culturally Responsive Teaching Techniques Scale (Oyerinde, 2008), 36 items from the Culturally Responsive Classroom Management Self-Efficacy Scale (Siwatu et al., 2017), and 42 items from the Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale (Siwatu, 2007).

Follow-Up Interviews

After completing the survey questionnaire, participants were recruited to complete follow-up interviews. Three questions were asked during each interview, with follow-up questions as needed. The questions for the interview were:

1. How do you create a safe classroom space for your students?
2. Do you think it is your role as a social studies teacher to address issues of race and racism in your social studies classroom?
3. What instructional strategies do you use to incorporate culturally responsive teaching?

Follow-up questions outlined in the Interview Protocol (see Appendix B) allowed all participants to expand on the topics addressed by the interview questions, and also provided opportunities for participants to clarify their initial responses. These questions provided detailed insight into how the participating teachers understand the significance of and how they work to create safe spaces

in their classrooms, how they understand their role as a social studies teacher in addressing issues of race and racism, and what culturally responsive strategies they currently utilize.

Results

This section analyzes quantitative and qualitative data collected during the needs assessment. Secondary, de-identified student data are also analyzed in this section. The results are organized according to the previously mentioned research questions. Quantitative data were uploaded into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to run descriptive data on selected items within each instrument as individual sub-sections. The quantitative data were collected during the needs assessment through Qualtrics. The link to the survey was sent out to all teachers in the social studies department and remained open for 1 month. Eleven teachers fully completed the survey. An additional three participants began the survey but did not complete it, resulting in a response rate of 45.8%.

Question 1: How Do Students Perceive Racial and Cultural Inclusivity From Teachers in This Context?

This de-identified secondary data were entered into SPSS, and descriptive statistics were used to analyze how students perceive racial prejudice and cultural inclusivity in this specific context and how students perceive the administration's response in addressing instances of prejudice and discrimination. Of the 133 student participants, 67 students self-identified as Black or African American, 19 self-identified as White, 22 self-identified as Asian, and 41 self-identified as Hispanic or Latino. Several students identified as more than one category and were recorded as such.

Four items in this survey asked students how they perceive prejudice within this school. Table 2.3 reports the frequency of perceptions of prejudice within the school, with the following

questions included: Q.1 – Do you believe prejudice exists in the school?, Q.2 – How often does prejudice against gender occur?, Q.3 – How often does prejudice against people of color occur?, and Q.4 – Does the school take measures against prejudice?

Table 2.3

Student Perceptions of Prejudice in the School

	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
All the time	17	12.8%	9	6.8%	16	12%	9	6.8%
Very common	22	16.5%	26	19.5%	22	16.5%	14	10.5%
Common	44	33.1%	44	33.1%	36	27.1%	31	23.3%
Very little	42	31.6%	38	28.6%	47	35.3%	62	46.6%
None	8	6%	16	12%	12	9%	17	12.8%

These findings indicate most students perceived prejudice in the school but to varied extents. Most participants also perceived acts of prejudice based on gender and race to exist within the school and to varying extents. A significant finding from these data is that 46.6% of student participants believed that the school does little to take action against prejudice. Another question in the survey asked participants if they believe the school advocates against prejudice and discrimination; 27.1% of participants ($n = 36$) responded yes, they do believe that the school actively advocates against prejudice and discrimination, while 33.1% of participants ($n = 44$) responded that they do not feel the school actively advocates against prejudice and discrimination. A third option of “maybe” was provided as an answer choice for this question, and 38.3% of participants ($n = 51$) chose this answer. While I do not know what the creators of

this survey intended by offering this answer option, I can infer that the participants who selected this answer feel that the school does something to advocate against prejudice and discrimination but perhaps not enough. Overall, these data indicate that students perceive actions of prejudice within the school and do not feel that the school adequately advocates against this.

When asked if the participants have experienced instances of prejudice themselves, 43.6% of participants ($n = 58$) responded that they have personally experienced instances of prejudice. In comparison, 56.4% of participants ($n = 75$) responded that they have not personally experienced instances of prejudice. While most student participants have not personally experienced instances of prejudice, it is evident that prejudice is present within the school. A follow-up question asked participants whom they experienced prejudice from. If students experienced prejudice from more than one individual or group, they may appear in more than one category. Twenty-six students indicated they experienced prejudice from a stranger, 34 students indicated they experienced prejudice from a friend, 25 students indicated they experienced prejudice from a teacher or administrator, seven students indicated they experienced prejudice from a trustworthy adult, and 65 students indicated that they had not personally experienced prejudice within the school.

Question 2: In What Ways Do Teachers Create Safe Spaces for Students?

The first sub-section of the survey questionnaire administered via Qualtrics asked participants to reflect on their understanding of what makes a classroom safe. The questions in this sub-section come from the Importance of Classroom Environment sub-section of the Safe Spaces Questionnaire (Holley & Steiner, 2005). Item one of this sub-section asked participants about the importance of creating a classroom environment where students feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and opinions by using a 5-point Likert scale. No participants responded

with “not at all important” or “a little bit important,” one participant responded “moderately important,” four participants responded “very important,” and nine participants responded “extremely important.” This indicates that these participants believe that creating an environment where students feel comfortable expressing their thoughts is important.

The follow-up interviews allowed participants to expand on how they create safe spaces within their classrooms, and specific strategies they incorporate to do so. Of the seven participants who completed the follow-up interviews, the following strategies were identified as emergent codes: acknowledging differences between themselves and their students as well as between the students themselves, developing personal relationships with their students, and earning their students’ trust. Several teachers stated that they did not have similar upbringings as their students and come from different cultural backgrounds. These teachers explained the importance of acknowledging those differences between themselves and their students to help their students feel comfortable. Additionally, one teacher expressed the importance of helping students acknowledge differences amongst their peers and using those differences to incorporate diverse perspectives in the classroom. Highlighting all the differences in the classroom “allows them to understand each other better and understand that, even though they’re different, they’re not so different.” This strategy of acknowledging differences was one way to begin gaining students’ trust.

Earning Trust

Another way to earn the trust of students is by following through on statements made at the beginning of the year. Each teacher who participated in these follow-up interviews explained that they use the beginning of the school year to establish procedures and expectations to help students feel comfortable in the classroom. However, one teacher pointed out the importance of

following through on those statements and showing commitment to maintaining a safe classroom space. For example, this teacher discussed how important it is to acknowledge when students use inappropriate or offensive terms or phrases to explain what is acceptable and unacceptable in the classroom. This allows the students to see that their teacher is committed to maintaining a classroom where all students are respected and accepted.

Developing Relationships

One final strategy used by teachers to help establish their classroom as safe and comfortable is through developing personal relationships with their students. Teachers mentioned finding out what clubs, sports, or extracurricular activities their students are involved in to help get to know their students while at the same time revealing small amounts of personal information about themselves. One teacher explained that opening up about his personal life "... helps because I think that if I'm open, or at least seem open and honest, they're more likely to be open, honest and feel safe as well." This strategy was mentioned by three teachers during their follow-up interviews, and each shared examples of how developing personal relationships helped them connect with students whom other teachers have described as difficult or disengaged.

Question 3: What Are Teachers' Perceptions of Self-Efficacy for Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices in Their Classrooms?

Siwatu's (2007) Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale (CRTSE) was incorporated in the survey questionnaire to analyze teachers' confidence in incorporating culturally responsive strategies in their classrooms. This instrument used a 0–100 scale rather than a traditional Likert scale and asked participants to rate their level of confidence for each item, with a zero indicating no confidence and 100 indicating complete confidence. Of the 14 teachers who participated in this survey, only 11 completed this sub-section. Findings indicate

teachers have higher self-efficacy for cultural responsiveness related to developing relationships with their students and acknowledging students' cultural diversity to incorporate into their teaching. Table 2.4 contains the average mean score for select items from the CRTSE scale (Siwatu, 2007).

Table 2.4

Mean Scores for Select Items From CRTSE (Siwatu, 2007)

Scale item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Build a sense of trust in my students	94	6.94
Use a variety of teaching methods	85.8	10.36
Use my students' cultural background to help make learning meaningful	76.6	16.76
Design a classroom environment using displays that reflects a variety of cultures	67.3	29.47
Develop a personal relationship with my students	91.2	10.45
Revise instructional material to include a better representation of cultural groups	73.9	22.85
Critically examine the curriculum to determine whether it reinforces negative cultural stereotypes	83.6	11.28
Use examples that are familiar to students from diverse cultural backgrounds	66	25.09
Teach students about their cultures' contributions to society	67.5	29.61

These results indicate that teachers have higher self-efficacy for developing personal relationships with their students and lower self-efficacy for integrating culturally responsive strategies into their classrooms, specifically related to incorporating culturally responsive examples, teaching about various cultures' contributions to society, and designing a classroom environment that reflects students' cultural diversity.

Siwatu et al.'s (2017) Culturally Responsive Classroom Management Self-Efficacy Scale (CRCMSE) was incorporated into the questionnaire to analyze teachers' self-efficacy beliefs about classroom management strategies that are associated with successful culturally responsive teachers. The scale consists of 35 items related to culturally responsive classroom management that participants are asked to rank on a scale from 0 to 100 based on how confident they feel they are able to implement those tasks. Table 2.5 contains the average mean score to four items from this scale that specifically relate to acknowledging cultural diversity in the classroom and having the classroom and instruction reflect that ($n = 14$).

Table 2.5

Mean Scores for Select Items From CRCMSE (Siwatu et al., 2017) Related to Perceptions of Self-Efficacy

Scale item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Create a learning environment that conveys respect for the cultures of all students in my classroom	84	10.35
Use what I know about my students' cultural background to develop an effective learning environment	78.9	16.69
Design the classroom in a way that communicates respect for diversity	87.4	9.11
Personalize the classroom so that it is reflective of the cultural background of my students	72.2	18.39

These data indicate that teachers feel moderately confident in their classroom management strategies related to specific areas of cultural responsiveness outlined in Table 2.5. Specifically, teachers indicated higher self-efficacy in their abilities to establish their classrooms as a place that respects cultural diversity yet slightly lower self-efficacy in their beliefs to specifically

integrate that into their practice. The standard deviations for each average mean score are rather high, indicating more variance around the mean score.

These two instruments specifically measured teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy for cultural responsiveness, but neither contained items that address how race and racism are acknowledged or addressed. Therefore, the follow-up interviews allowed participants to share their beliefs about their role as social studies teachers in addressing issues of race and racism. Several of the participants indicated that they feel mostly comfortable having conversations about race and racism in their classrooms, and most of them attributed that comfort to the content they teach. Much of the social studies curriculum, including both United States History and World History courses, have issues related to race and racism embedded within the content, and teachers described making it a point to emphasize these topics in the syllabus. Several teachers explained that they approach teaching about race and racism as factual and part of the history that they teach and then encourage students to make connections with modern-day. Additionally, the majority of individuals who participated in the interviews are White, and several expressed that while they feel comfortable discussing issues related to race and racism, they are careful to acknowledge their identity as a White individual teaching primarily racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse students. However, all participants reported firmly believing it is their role as social studies teachers to encourage and allow conversations about race and racism in their classroom.

Question 4: What Instructional Strategies Do Teachers Use to Incorporate Culturally Responsive Pedagogy/Teaching?

The Culturally Responsive Teaching Techniques Scale (CRTTS; Oyerinde, 2008) includes five items that asked participants to identify on a 5 point-Likert scale how often they

incorporate various culturally responsive teaching techniques. Table 2.6 depicts the average mean score for each statement in the section of the CRTTS that asked teachers how often they implement various culturally responsive techniques.

Table 2.6

Mean Scores for Culturally Responsive Teaching Techniques Scale (Oyerinde, 2008)

Scale item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. I provide students with examples and materials, which reflect different cultures other than their own.	3.93	.829
2. I employ a variety of teaching styles to meet the learning needs of all students.	3.71	.611
3. My teaching techniques help students to view concepts, issues, themes, and problems from diverse ethnic and cultural perspectives.	4.00	.679
4. I have a system in place to help students develop more positive racial attitudes and values.	3.64	.842
5. I support restructuring of the culture and organization of my school so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and gender groups will experience equality.	4.29	.611

The average scores for each item in this scale fell between 3.64 and 4.29; however, the standard deviation varied per item. Two items had slightly higher standard deviations, indicating a wider dispersal of responses. Item 4 ($SD = .842$) had a higher standard deviation and a lower average mean score, indicating teachers employed this culturally responsive technique related to helping students develop more positive racial attitudes and values less often. This indicates an area for development for my intervention.

To analyze how teachers in this context currently incorporate culturally responsive instructional strategies, several items from the CRCMSE (Siwatu et al., 2017) are analyzed in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7*Mean Scores for CRCMSE (Siwatu et al., 2017) Items Related to Instructional Strategies*

Scale item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2. Assess students' behaviors with the knowledge that acceptable school behaviors may not match those that are acceptable within a student's home culture	65.57	16.43
3. Use culturally responsive discipline practices to alter the behavior of a student who is being defiant	61.3	20.3
4. Create a learning environment that conveys respect for the cultures of all students in my classroom	84.07	10.35
5. Use my knowledge of students' cultural backgrounds to create a culturally compatible learning environment	76.14	18.62
8. Structure the learning environment so that all students feel like a valued member of the learning community	89.78	9.6
9. Use what I know about my students' cultural background to develop an effective learning environment	78.92	16.69
11. Design the classroom in a way that communicates respect for diversity	87.42	9.11
13. Address inappropriate behavior without relying on traditional methods of discipline such as office referrals	87.07	9.62
14. Critically analyze students' classroom behavior from a cross-cultural perspective	74.78	16.47
17. Restructure the curriculum so that every child can succeed, regardless of their academic history	83.14	14.13
18. Communicate with students using expressions that are familiar to them	83.00	11.44
19. Personalize the classroom so that it is reflective of the cultural background of my students	72.28	18.39
24. Critically assess whether a particular behavior constitutes misbehavior	82.35	17.01
30. Model classroom routines for English Language Learners	72.14	27.46
31. Explain classroom rules so that they are easily understood by English Language Learners	78.69	19.58

Scale item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
32. Modify aspects of the classroom so that it matches aspects of students' home culture	58.71	24.32
33. Implement an intervention that minimizes a conflict that occurs when a students' culturally-based behavior is not consistent with school norms	64.28	21.18
34. Develop an effective classroom management plan based on my understanding of students' family background	70.28	19.7
35. Manage situations in which students are defiant	75.64	15.64

While this instrument included a wide variety of culturally responsive techniques, the average mean response for all items included in Table 2.7 were higher than 50, indicating that most teachers feel confident in their ability to incorporate these culturally responsive techniques. Item 8, “structure the learning environment so that all students feel like a valued member of the learning community,” had the highest average mean score of 89.78, and the smallest standard deviation ($SD = 9.6$), indicating most teachers feel extremely confident in their ability to implement this technique, and the majority of responses were close to the mean score. The three items related to behavior management, Items 2, 3, and 33, had lower average mean scores with higher standard deviations, indicating fewer teachers feel confident in these techniques.

The follow-up interviews allowed teachers to expand on the culturally responsive strategies they implement in their classrooms, and there was a wider variety of strategies, even though some strategies were vague. The majority of participants indicated they believe developing strong personal relationships and establishing their classrooms as safe spaces are important strategies for cultural responsiveness. However, when asked how they understood culturally responsive teaching, most teachers did not directly answer the question. This indicates that there may be confusion or uncertainty about what exactly culturally responsive teaching is.

Several teachers also indicated that they believe acknowledging diversity in the classroom is a key component of being culturally responsive, yet only three participants specifically explained strategies they implement to help students be aware of diversity in the classroom. Most participants emphasized developing strong relationships with their students as the foundation for a culturally responsive classroom.

Conclusion & Implications

Although social studies teachers in this context understand the importance of incorporating culturally responsive teaching practices, findings indicate a need for comprehensive professional development to address strategies to incorporate culturally responsive practices specifically. This professional development should occur over an extended period of time and be embedded within teachers' current practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Haviland & Rodriguez-Kiino, 2009). Research indicates that students can draw connections between their personal lives and the content learned within the classroom when teachers actively work to include diverse histories and perspectives from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds by implementing culturally responsive teaching (Epstein et al., 2011; Martell, 2013). Unfortunately, there is limited research about the direct connection between culturally responsive pedagogy professional development and student learning as it is difficult to attribute enhanced CRP to professional development only (Sleeter, 2012).

Chapter 3

Intervention Literature Review

In the United States, social studies teachers are insufficiently prepared to discuss race and racism in the classroom (Castagno, 2008; Curry, 2015; Picower, 2009). This gap in teacher preparation can affect teachers' ability to create safe classroom spaces for all students, especially racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse students. This chapter offers a review of research literature on potential interventions to address the problem of practice of aiding teachers in their development of culturally responsive pedagogy, specifically related to social studies content. This chapter includes an overview of findings from the needs assessment conducted and described in chapter two, and then briefly describes possible interventions for this context to address the findings from the needs assessment. Finally, this chapter will detail an intervention, supported by existing research literature, that addresses how to best support social studies teachers' development of adequate culturally responsive pedagogy in their classrooms and the creation of safe classroom spaces for their students. This chapter presents a review of literature discussing interventions focused on expanding and developing culturally responsive teaching practices to address the varied understandings and implementations of culturally responsive teaching as determined by the needs assessment findings.

The literature review describes the theoretical framework selected to guide this intervention. The theoretical framework most appropriate for this intervention is guided by sociotransformative constructivism, or STC, which combines the sociocultural theory of learning (Vygotsky, 1978) with multicultural theory to address social justice issues. Sociotransformative constructivism, or STC, addresses the gap between those two theories by acknowledging that knowledge is constructed socially but also influenced by cultural, historical, and institutional

contexts (Rodriguez, 1998). The specific strategies highlighted below help teachers create safe spaces within their classrooms and introduce and lead conversations about issues related to race and racism in their social studies classes.

Overview of Needs Assessment Study

The mixed-methods needs assessment sought to understand how social studies teachers understood and implemented culturally responsive pedagogy and teaching practices in this context. Findings indicated that although most participants incorporated anti-racist teaching in their practice, they did not fully understand anti-racist teaching as a significant element of cultural responsiveness.

A total of 11 participants fully completed the quantitative survey, and three teachers began the survey but did not complete it. Their data are included in the questions they responded to. The quantitative survey included items about specific culturally responsive teaching strategies and how confident participants felt in implementing those strategies. The Culturally Responsive Teaching Techniques Scale (Oyerinde, 2008) included five items that ask participants to identify on a Likert Scale how often they incorporate culturally responsive teaching techniques, one item that asks how often they incorporate various instructional methods, and one item about how various factors affect teachers' efficacy. The Culturally Responsive Classroom Management Self-Efficacy Scale (Siwatu et al., 2017) consisted of culturally responsive classroom management items that participants are asked to rank on a scale from 0 to 100 based on how confident they feel can implement those tasks. Statement items included teachers' confidence in creating respectful classroom learning environments, depth of knowledge about students' cultural backgrounds, and how to use that information in a culturally responsive learning environment (Siwatu et al., 2017).

A follow-up qualitative interview allowed participants ($n = 7$) to expand on their understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy and teaching strategies. An initial review of data from the needs assessment indicates that teachers have varied interpretations of culturally responsive teaching practices, which leads to various strategies implemented in social studies classrooms. Several teachers ($n = 2$) demonstrated a deep understanding of culturally responsive teaching and implement appropriate strategies in their classrooms, while others ($n = 5$) have limited or even incorrect understandings of culturally responsive teaching and implement strategies that do not align with culturally responsive teaching. A few teachers do not implement any culturally responsive strategies. One specific area identified for improvement is culturally responsive practices related to anti-racism; several teachers alluded to incorporating anti-racist practices as part of their cultural responsiveness but did not specifically identify them as anti-racist. For example, one teacher explained how they acknowledge the presence of racism throughout the content they teach but attributed that to teaching required content rather than a culturally responsive practice. Another teacher shared how they make a point to acknowledge their White identity and explain to their students that they understand White privilege and how they have benefitted from it. This teacher viewed this as a strategy to establish rapport with their students and did not recognize it as a specific anti-racist practice.

Although this context is currently engaged in a multi-year program designed to increase enrollment in AP and honors-level courses for students of color and help teachers increase their culturally responsive practices, the needs assessment indicated that all teachers find this program ineffective and inappropriate. This program is run by someone outside of the district who instructs a small group of lead teachers to turnkey new information to the rest of the faculty. When asked about the effectiveness of this professional development, all teachers indicated that

they feel it is unsuccessful. Teachers identified issues with the way this information is rolled out, feel patronized by the approach of the sessions, and the inappropriate environment for these types of conversations where teachers are unable to take time to reflect and discuss, ultimately describing this professional development as an overall failure. Several teachers stated they feel the district is rolling out this program to check a box and say that it has addressed culturally responsive teaching practices. As this current professional development lacks collaboration, active involvement of teachers in this context, and does not incorporate coaching to support teacher practice, it is considered ineffective (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone & Garet, 2015).

The following sections will provide an overview of literature focused on teacher practice and student experiences, specifically highlighting how culturally responsive pedagogy, teachers' critical consciousness, and creating safe classroom spaces benefit students. Then, I will present literature focused on professional development, to consider how to support teacher practices and beliefs that benefit students. Based on the literature and needs assessment data, the intervention focused on providing participants the opportunity to actively engage and collaborate with their colleagues while developing culturally responsive teaching skills through the use of small-group coaching sessions and observations conducted via instructional rounds. The following section will conclude with a discussion of small-group coaching sessions and instructional rounds as effective professional development methods will.

Teacher Practice

Students benefit when teachers make race explicit in their instruction and actively incorporate culturally responsive practices (LaRaviere, 2008). Doing so helps to highlight and dismantle the dominant narrative of White, Eurocentric history in social studies classes, and how

teachers approach teaching about race influences the way students understand the topic of race (Epstein et al., 2011; Howard, 2004; Martell & Stevens, 2017). Teachers can also actively combat required curricula that avoid controversial topics such as racism, genocide, and systems of power, as well as work to ensure that diverse histories and perspectives are incorporated to help transform schools and communities (Gay, 2002, 2010). Research indicates that students can draw connections between their personal lives and the content learned within the classroom when teachers actively work to include diverse histories and perspectives from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds by implementing culturally responsive teaching (Epstein et al., 2011; Martell, 2013). Martell (2013) self-examined teaching practices for cultural relevance and found that attempts to explicitly incorporate diverse voices and histories in their high school social studies classroom helped students better understand their racial identity. Using a mixed-methods study that collected data from the student population, students, particularly racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse students, expressed that explicit culturally relevant instruction helped challenge the notion that the United States has been achieving racial progress since the Civil Rights Movement. Based on these data, Martell (2013) found that when teachers center conversations about race in social studies classrooms, students benefit. Additionally, students benefit when White teachers acknowledge their Whiteness and how it affects their racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse students when White history is the dominant narrative of social studies classrooms.

One goal of implementing culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy is to allow students to expand their cultural competence and knowledge, furthering social justice in education (Gay, 2010). Social justice pedagogy supports students' development of agency and empowerment through recognizing and understanding how society is affected by social and

political factors stemming from understandings of race and culture (Gutstein, 2003). Teachers who have increased cultural and racial awareness are more successful in engaging their students in critical reflection of their community and the larger society, a significant component of social justice pedagogy (Esposito & Swain, 2009). Effective culturally responsive teaching practices occur when teachers make race explicit in their instruction and assist students in drawing connections with their lived experiences.

Making race explicit in instruction and actively incorporating culturally responsive practices can help highlight and dismantle the dominant narrative of White European history in social studies classes, and how teachers approach teaching about race (Epstein et al., 2011; Howard, 2004; Martell & Stevens, 2017). How teachers understand racial identity, racism, and Whiteness influences how they approach discussing issues of racism, directly impacting their students' experiences within the classroom. In a 1 academic year-long study examining the effects of teachers' pedagogical choices on 21 African-American and Latino students' understandings of racism, Epstein et al. (2011) found they had a better understanding of the role of political social justice movements throughout the history of the United States. Towards the end of the study, eight students were randomly selected to be interviewed and provide elaboration on the responses they initially provided. These students demonstrated a more complex understanding of racism and the role that minoritized individuals and groups played throughout history in enacting political change. Howard (2004) also found that social studies teachers need to explicitly acknowledge race and racism to help students understand the history of the United States. When teachers explicitly address race and racism, students can more effectively understand the complex history of the United States (Epstein et al., 2011; Howard, 2004).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

One way in which social studies teachers can effectively approach conversations about race is by utilizing culturally responsive pedagogy. Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995a, 2014) proposed using culturally responsive pedagogy, or CRP, to address inequitable outcomes for students of color in U.S. education systems. The theory of CRP includes three main tenets: the goal is for students to experience academic success, help students develop and maintain their own cultural identity while learning about other cultures, and aid students in learning about social justice and how to actively work towards it. Multiple scholars suggest ways to put these tenets into practice; as defined by Gay (2002), culturally responsive pedagogy is “teaching practices that attend to the specific cultural characteristics that make students different from one another and the teacher” (p. 44). Those cultural characteristics include cultural values and traditions, norms for communication, and various learning styles (Gay, 2002). Additionally, Carter Andrews (2021) outlined four specific principles for teachers to become more culturally responsive. These four principles are: engage in self-reflection to understand how identity and social experiences influence an individual teacher’s beliefs and practices, develop a thorough understanding of race as a social phenomenon that influences society and current education systems, acknowledge the presence of Whiteness in current systems of education related to policies, curricula, and practices, and seek to center experiences and knowledge of racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse individuals and groups to eradicate the norm of Whiteness and influences of White Supremacy (Carter Andrews, 2021).

For the purpose of this research, I will also include Beauboeuf-Lafontant’s (1999) concept of politically relevant teaching, which acknowledges the historical, social, and political understandings of teachers and how this influences how they perceive teaching students of color.

These elements of context identified in politically relevant teaching (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 1999) align with STC by requiring teachers to integrate the social and cultural contexts of their students into teachers' practice, as well as engage in reflexivity to acknowledge how systems of power within education impact their students' education experience. In LaRaviere's (2008) autoethnography about politically relevant teaching focused on their teaching of Fred Hampton's role in U.S. history, educators identifying themselves as culturally relevant need to be aware of the role of racism and how it influences diverse histories. Additionally, LaRaviere (2008) points out that politically relevant teachers ultimately take political stances by incorporating alternate resources and materials into their teaching that help challenge status-quo beliefs and histories. LaRaviere (2008) cited both Ladson-Billings (1994) and Beauboeuf-Lafontant (1999) when explaining the importance of teachers engaging in critical reflection of the curriculum they teach and working to bring in politically- and culturally-relevant information. As such, LaRaviere (2008) emphasized teachers' abilities to recognize and acknowledge how racism influences the histories of minoritized individuals and groups and make this explicit in their classrooms in order to become politically relevant.

While non-racism and anti-racism are specific approaches teachers can take to address issues of racism, Noguera and Alicea (2020) suggested that teachers need to examine and understand the influence of structural racism, which acknowledges how the presence of racism throughout history has influenced our society. Depending on individual teachers' personal experiences related to their racial identity, dialogic conversation (Bahktin, 1981), or understanding who is speaking and their experiences, is an integral component of recognizing how teachers engage in conversations about race and racism with their students. If teachers fail to recognize the presence and impact of racism and minimize instances of racism, they send a

message to students of color that students' experiences with racism are not valid (Bonilla-Silva, 2010), which in turn can lead students to disengage with their class and the wider educational process.

Culturally responsive teachers have certain characteristics (Rychly & Graves, 2012). These characteristics include being caring and empathetic (Gay, 2002; Warren, 2017), and awareness of their beliefs surrounding other cultures and their own cultural biases and experiences (Rychly & Graves, 2012). Although Carter Andrews's (2021) research primarily focuses on teacher education programs, these principles are appropriate for an intervention focused on helping practicing teachers develop culturally responsive pedagogy. An additional factor essential for teachers to successfully incorporate culturally responsive pedagogy and strategies into their classrooms is empathy; Warren (2017) explained the significance of empathy in helping teachers connect their understanding of their students with how they engage with those students, thus applying culturally responsive strategies. These principles and elements are crucial for teachers seeking to develop culturally responsive strategies and pedagogy within their classrooms.

There are four indicators of culturally responsive pedagogy to look for. The first indicator highlights cultural competence and sociopolitical awareness on behalf of the teacher and focuses on academic success in student outcomes (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995a, 2014). The second indicator acknowledges the connection between learning in the classroom with students' lives and experiences outside of school (Gay, 2010). The final two indicators relate to students' perceptions; the third indicator is how students perceive their teachers' attitudes towards them. Culturally responsive teachers create environments where their students feel seen and valued in their classrooms (Gay 2013; Rychly & Graves, 2012; Tosolt, 2010). The fourth and final

indicator centers on students' beliefs that their racial, ethnic, and cultural identities are identified and respected by adults in the school (Paris & Alim, 2014). These four indicators allow teachers to self-reflect on their beliefs and practices to determine areas for growth in developing a culturally relevant pedagogical practice. Self-reflection is one of the four principles Carter Andrews (2021) identified as a way to help teachers become more culturally responsive as it asks to understand how identity and social experiences influence an individual teacher's beliefs and practices. The intervention was designed address this principle to help participants develop their critical consciousness.

Critical Consciousness

Critical consciousness refers to teachers' recognition and dedication to dismantling systems of oppression and racism within their classrooms (Freire, 1973). If White teachers have a thorough understanding of and ability to acknowledge Whiteness as a system of oppression, they can successfully work towards dismantling those systems of oppression and racism. White teachers are less likely to have experienced oppression the same way that racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse teachers have; White teachers should acknowledge their political beliefs and pedagogical approaches aligned with critical consciousness (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 1998). If White teachers cannot fully understand the role of White privilege and systemic racism, then training and professional development created to help them incorporate anti-racist teaching practices will only be somewhat successful (Mosley, 2010; Vaught & Castagno, 2008). This aligns with the STC element of metacognition as teachers can critically reflect on the content they are asked to teach their students and how those curricular decisions were made. Acknowledging the presence of Whiteness and White Supremacy in our education

system is a crucial first step in developing cultural responsiveness. White teachers may require an added layer of self-reflection and reflexivity to analyze their own experiences.

Colorblindness, or when teachers actively ignore “seeing” race to instead promote a “neutral” approach (Frankenberg, 1997; Galman et al., 2010; Leonardo, 2008), is one way in which teachers fail to recognize the presence of Whiteness. In a study designed to analyze six White teachers’ personal narratives surrounding race to understand why some White teachers reject colorblindness, Johnson (2002) noted that the White participants’ perspectives on race and racism were heavily influenced by their personal experiences related to these topics and their roles in working against injustices related to race and racism. Additionally, some participants indicated they considered themselves outsiders in their personal lives due to their sexual orientation or socioeconomic status, which made those individuals feel as though they were not part of the traditional White mainstream narrative (Johnson, 2002). Some participants viewed racial differences only in their Black students, perpetuating a Black-White paradigm. In fact, one participant noted she focused more on a student’s culture and background than their racial identity; while this is not exactly engaging in colorblindness, it ignores the role of race in those students’ lived experiences. Additionally, LaRaviere (2008) explained why teachers should reject colorblindness:

Teachers cannot dodge this responsibility with the claim of “colorblindness.” To claim that one is colorblind is an act that does more than just pronounce that one does not see race; it pronounces that one does not see racism. A teacher who claims colorblindness announces to the world that they are blind to a historical and social force that still has tremendous negative effects on the ability of African American students to reach their

full potential in life. A teacher who is blind to that force is therefore incapable of helping his students to overcome it. (p. 501)

When teachers engage in colorblindness, they reject the lived experiences and histories of racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse students and are therefore unable to teach those students with a culturally responsive approach.

Some White teachers recognize and understand that diversity is a lived experience and cannot be learned as an abstract concept; however, if those teachers also experienced some sort of challenge as a result of diversity, they feel as though they understand the experiences of people of color (Ullucci, 2011). In a study about how three White teachers in an urban district learned about race, the framework of critical race methodology (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002) was utilized to analyze how lived experiences impact beliefs about privilege and bias related to race and racism. Ullucci (2011) found that the participant's believed diversity was a lived experience rather than a concept that can be learned about. However, these participants also believed they could empathize with their students of color as they had experienced hardships in their lives, mainly related to socioeconomic status. These beliefs could restrict teachers' acknowledgment of the role of race and racism if they believe they understand what racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse students experience, and limit how they address these issues in their classrooms.

Safe Spaces in the Classroom

In addition to teaching the content of their specific subject, teachers' responsibilities also include creating a safe space within the classroom so that all students feel respected and able to engage actively. For students to engage in the classroom, they need to feel safe. Although Boostrom (1998) analyzed the phrase *safe space* through a metaphorical lens, research agrees

that students who feel safe expressing themselves in a classroom will often experience increased learning (Boostrom, 1998; Gayle et al., 2013). However, there is a misconception about what safe space actually looks like in a classroom; Safe does not necessarily mean comfortable. Discomfort is needed for students to grow and develop as learners to allow them to challenge their beliefs and understandings (Boostrom, 1998; Gayle et al., 2013; Holley & Steiner, 2005; Hyde & Ruth, 2002).

When addressing topics such as race and racism, a level of discomfort is often necessary to appropriately acknowledge biases and allow for open and honest conversations about topics that might be uncomfortable (Gayle et al., 2013; Holley & Steiner, 2005). Even though students may experience slight discomfort, students need to feel safe in the classroom in order for them to engage. An essential element of a safe space in the classroom is when students feel their teacher values them and does not create obstacles to success based on their racial identity; this student belief leads to increased engagement (Chapman, 2013; Friend & Caruthers, 2012). As noted by Andrews and Gutwein (2017), disconnects exist between teachers' perceptions about how their expectations are understood by their students, and how their students perceive those expectations. Some teachers have different or lower expectations for students of color, which negatively impacts the relationship between them and their teachers (Andrews & Gutwein, 2017; Chapman, 2013; Friend & Caruthers, 2012).

Theoretical Framework

Sociotransformative constructivism (STC) is a theoretical framework developed by Rodriguez (1998) to fill a gap between social constructivism and multicultural education influenced by the social justice theory of multiculturalism. Within STC, existing contexts, specifically historical, cultural, and institutional, can work to meet social justice goals by acknowledging the influence of these contexts on learning and access to learning (Rodriguez,

1998). STC identifies four specific elements that are necessary to adequately allow for meaningful learning in the classroom and address issues of social justice. These elements, dialogic conversation, authentic activity, metacognition, and reflexivity, are essential to breaking down existing power structures that prevent students from learning.

This research addresses how individual teachers' understanding of race and racism influence their decisions about what to teach and how to teach in social studies classes, which can affect their ability to create a safe classroom space by becoming more culturally responsive. The four tenets of STC support this process. First, dialogic conversation highlights the importance of not just what is said, but the experiences, beliefs, and values of the person saying it and how those factors influence what is being said (Rodriguez & Berryman, 2002). Rodriguez (1998) built off Bakhtin's (1981) notion of the *speaking consciousness*, which is just as important as what is being said; this is integral in understanding why individual teachers say certain things as a result of their personal experiences, beliefs, and values (Rodriguez, 1998). The second tenet of STC, authentic activity, ensures that activities within the classroom are not just hands-on, but also relevant and explicit to the cultural and social context of the students (Rodriguez, 1998). As STC attempts to bridge the gap between constructivism and multiculturalism by actively creating learning environments that work toward social justice and empowering students, STC specifically highlights the teacher's responsibility not only to understand their students' social and cultural contexts but also to integrate that understanding into their practice.

The third tenet, metacognition, emphasizes that students should reflect on how they learn, what they are learning, and why they are being asked to learn it (Rodriguez, 1998). As applied to teachers, metacognition references individual teachers' abilities to consider how they teach

content, what the specific content is, and why students need to learn this content (Rodriguez, 1998). This element allows both students and teachers to think out loud, and become aware of how others think, which might differ from their own way of thinking and processing. The fourth tenet, reflexivity, helps students and teachers increase awareness of what has shaped their learning experience, including cultural identity, socioeconomic status, beliefs and values, and previous educational experience (Rodriguez, 1998). Reflexivity also allows students and teachers to identify systems of power within education, and how that can affect other individuals' education experiences. Acknowledging these systems of power within education and the impact on their students' education experience is essential for teachers to work towards meeting social justice goals.

Literature Review

This section will examine relevant literature surrounding effective professional development. Based on the available literature, I propose small-group coaching sessions and instructional rounds to help support the planned intervention. As this context already offers traditional professional development related to enhancing culturally responsive teaching practices, this intervention will utilize different strategies to help social studies teachers develop their culturally responsive teaching practices through small-group coaching sessions and instructional round observations.

Effective Professional Development

As defined by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), effective professional development utilizes organized and relevant learning to change teacher practice to improve student learning. Traditional professional development often relies on lecture-based presentations and offers little opportunity for teachers to connect the material to their practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017;

Leonard & Woodland, 2022). Researchers have identified several elements of effective professional development, including content-specific focus, active learning, coherence, sustained duration, and collaboration for teachers to engage with their colleagues and work to develop new teaching strategies, and the role of coaching and feedback (Archibald et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone et al., 2002; Desimone & Garet, 2015). Coaching is one format that can support these elements, as it allows teachers to receive support and guidance based on their specific individual needs, and feedback allows teachers to modify or alter their practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Although there is limited research on the effects of instructional coaching on student outcomes (Archibald et al., 2011), coaching offers the benefit of collaboration and interaction with colleagues in addition to feedback which has been determined as an effective professional development approach.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Professional Development

While there are clear characteristics of effective professional development, professional development specifically focused on developing and enhancing cultural responsiveness has additional characteristics. Haviland and Rodriguez-Kiino (2009) emphasized the importance of culturally responsive professional development being embedded and ongoing. The element of ongoing is consistent with other effective professional development in that it remains consistent over an extended period of time rather than an isolated workshop or meeting. The aspect of embedded helps teachers connect with their current practice to understand how to make appropriate changes. Additionally, content-specific examples for enhancing culturally relevant instruction help teachers understand how they can replicate them in their own practice (Haviland & Rodriguez-Kiino, 2009).

Unfortunately, there is limited research about the direct connection between culturally responsive pedagogy professional development and student learning as it is difficult to attribute enhanced CRP to professional development only (Sleeter, 2012). Additionally, I could not find peer-reviewed material specifically examining coaching as professional development to develop culturally responsive teaching practices; Bottiani et al. (2017) noted the limited amount of literature for this specific focus.

However, one example of a specific professional development in New Zealand exists to develop cultural responsiveness for Maori students: Te Kotahitanga (Sleeter, 2012). Several studies have found evidence of increased student learning due to this specific culturally responsive-focused professional development (Bishop et al., 2009; Phillips et al., 2004). Although specifically designed for preservice teachers, Fitchett et al. (2012) proposed a three-step model for guiding preservice social studies teachers in their development of culturally responsive teaching and examined if this model increased confidence for teaching culturally responsive lessons. The first step, review, asks teacher candidates to examine who is prioritized and marginalized in social studies curricula; the second step, reflect, asks teacher candidates to consider the identities of the students and observe how their cooperating teachers interact with diverse students; the last step, react, teacher candidates were asked to create a culturally relevant lesson and implement it (Fitchett et al., 2012). Although this three-step model was specifically designed for preservice teachers, a similar model would be appropriate if modified for experienced teachers. Fitchett et al. (2012) found that preservice teachers had increased self-efficacy for implementing culturally responsive teaching as result of the three-step process.

Small-Group Coaching

One format that allows for the above-identified elements of effective professional development is coaching. Coaching in education is a relatively new professional development strategy; as such, there are varied definitions of coaching in education (Neumerski, 2012), and nascent research examines the impact of coaching on student achievement (Cornett & Knight, 2009). However, using instructional coaching for teachers positively impacts teachers' knowledge and skills (Kraft et al., 2018; Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010). There is no standard protocol or practice for what instructional coaching has to include (Poglinco et al., 2003). Four types of coaching are commonly identified within education: peer coaching, cognitive coaching, literacy coaching, and instructional coaching (Cornett & Knight, 2009). Peer coaching is a group of teachers engaging in self-reflection to examine current practices and share ideas and strategies to address an identified issue (Donegan et al., 2000). Within peer coaching, there are two models: expert and reciprocal. Expert coaching entails a trained teacher leading the coaching sessions, conducting observations, and providing feedback, while reciprocal coaching involves a small group of teachers observing each other and providing suggestions and feedback to each other (Donegan et al., 2000). The coaching process, which involves a cycle of observation, modeling, practice, and feedback (Kurz et al., 2017), will ultimately lead to student learning as teachers engage in this cyclical practice (Reddy et al., 2019). This intervention will combine both types of peer coaching, as the sessions will be led by the researcher or expert, but all participants will engage in observations and provide feedback and suggestions during a follow-up coaching session.

As defined by Desimone and Pak (2017), the coaching model emphasizes content through active and collaborative participation to positively impact teacher learning, which in turn

affects student learning. Coaching requires collaboration between individuals who engage in modeling and observations to elicit feedback to ultimately develop effective practices (Poglinco et al., 2003). As coaching involves interactions between facilitator and teachers, the active learning quality of effective professional development is present (Desimone & Pak, 2017). As a coaching strategy emphasizes active collaboration (Desimone & Pak, 2017), it can be described as an effective form of professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). The intervention consisted of several small-group coaching sessions over several months; another key element of effective professional development is the continuous cycle of coaching and reflection after observation (Teemant, 2014).

Instructional Rounds

Instructional rounds focus on improving instruction by engaging educators in a collaborative process to identify selected areas for improvement, conducting observations in classrooms focused on that area, and creating a strategy for improvement (City et al., 2009). The use of instructional rounds in education is a relatively new strategy, based on the use of medical rounds within the field of healthcare and medicine (Ellis et al., 2015; Elmore, 2007; Roegman & Riehl, 2012). Medical rounds are used as a way for medical practitioners to collaborate to improve practice within their field (Elmore, 2007). However, Roegman and Riehl (2012) stated that there is limited research on using rounds outside of medical education. However, a large amount of research on the efficacy of medical rounds as a practice helps to justify the use of instructional rounds in education as a way to engage participating educators in collaborative conversations to address a problem of practice and create solutions for improvement (Roegman & Riehl, 2012).

Elmore (2007) reported transferring this practice into the field of education in 2001 when a group of superintendents came together to conduct observations in classrooms across participating districts to find a solution to an identified problem of practice. The practice was then adapted across various states. Although there are no specific guidelines for the practice of instructional rounds, each implementation involves a group of administrators or faculty meeting together to identify a problem of practice, conduct observations in classrooms and take notes, and then discuss observations as a group to identify possible solutions for the problem of practice (Ellis et al., 2015; Roegman & Riehl, 2012). As noted by City et al. (2009), instructional rounds work to promote best practices across classrooms and within an organization by allowing continuous learning through observation and collaboration. Roegman and Riehl (2012) noted that the term *instructional rounds* are currently used to describe practices that are not necessarily similar to the original version as introduced by Elmore (2007) and has since evolved; for example, the use of instructional rounds in this research will not include superintendents, but rather teachers from within the specific context. As explained by Ellis et al. (2015), this form of instructional rounds would be identified as *teacher rounds*, which do not include administrative-level participants and only include teachers from one school who identify the problem of practice and conduct observations themselves (Del Prete, 2013). As the school in this context is already engaged in practicing instructional rounds, that is the term that will be used for this intervention.

Del Prete (2013) offered a four-step protocol for conducting rounds as an intervention within education. This research will use this protocol to guide the use of instructional rounds as part of the intervention. The first step is to identify the problem of practice, followed by step two which consists of an orientation for all participants to ensure they understand the problem of practice. The third step is the participants' physical observations, or rounds, conducted in

classrooms. The final round is the post-round reflection where all participants share their notes collected during the observations (Del Prete, 2013). For this research, the post-round reflection will allow for participants to share out their observations, but these sessions will be guided by Carter Andrews's (2021) four principles for becoming more culturally responsive: self-reflection, understanding race as a social phenomenon, acknowledging the presence of Whiteness, and center experiences and knowledge of racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse individuals.

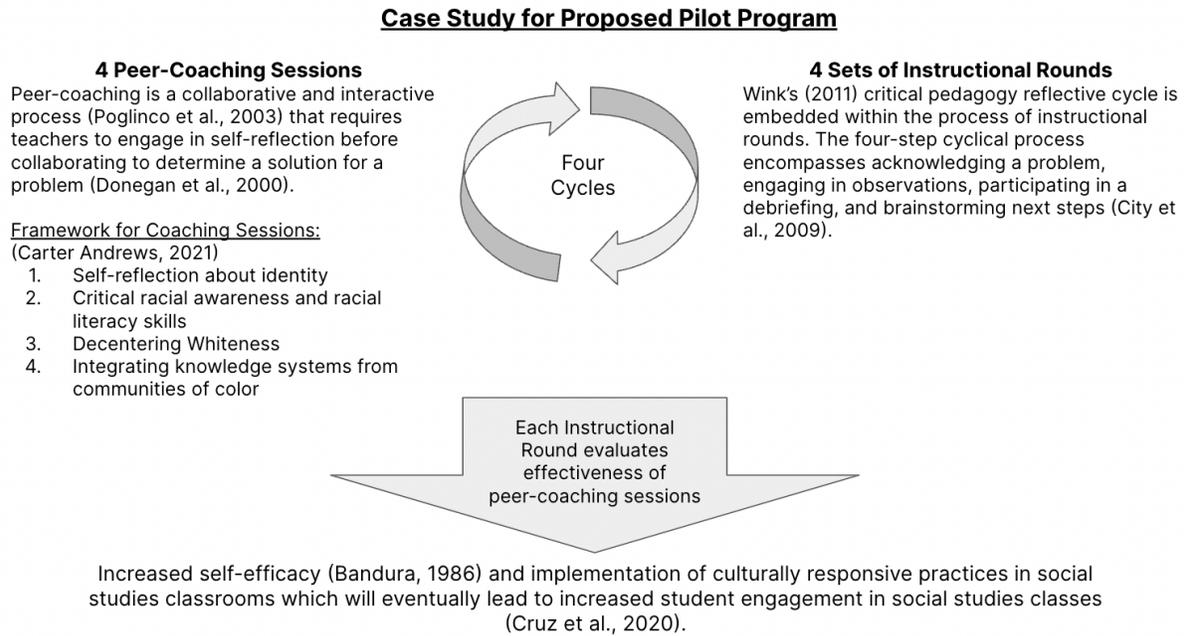
Chapter 4

Pilot Study Design

This qualitative pilot study incorporated a modified version of peer coaching where participants participated in coaching sessions and share observations and strategies, but each coaching session was guided by me and focused on each of the four principles of becoming more culturally responsive as outlined by Carter Andrews (2021). The instructional rounds element of the intervention allowed participating teachers to observe their colleagues and learn how to incorporate a variety of culturally responsive teaching practices. Peer coaching is a collaborative and interactive process (Poglinco et al., 2003) that requires teachers to engage in self-reflection before collaborating to determine a solution for a problem (Donegan et al., 2000). Following each coaching session focused on one principle for enhancing culturally responsive teaching practices, participants engaged in Wink's (2011) critical pedagogy reflective cycle embedded within the process of instructional rounds. The four-step cyclical process encompasses acknowledging a problem, engaging in observations, participating in a debriefing, and brainstorming next steps (City et al., 2009). Each instructional round evaluated the effectiveness of peer-coaching sessions. The overall purpose of this pilot study was to increase self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986) and implementation of culturally responsive practices in social studies classrooms, leading to increased student engagement in social studies classes (Cruz et al., 2020). The conceptual map for this pilot study is depicted in Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1

Concept Map of Comparative Case Study for Pilot Program



This intervention program was piloted with two participants ($n = 2$) to compare their experiences throughout the program. The pilot program was evaluated via process evaluation and outcome evaluation, both explained in the following sections.

Evaluation

Process Evaluation

To evaluate the process of this intervention, three components were measured using qualitative methods guided by the following questions:

1. Did participants feel engaged during the four small-group coaching sessions?
2. To what extent were the sessions focused on the predetermined topics?

The specific process evaluation components measured were participant responsiveness (Dusenbury et al., 2003), fidelity of implementation—adherence (Dusenbury et al., 2003), and

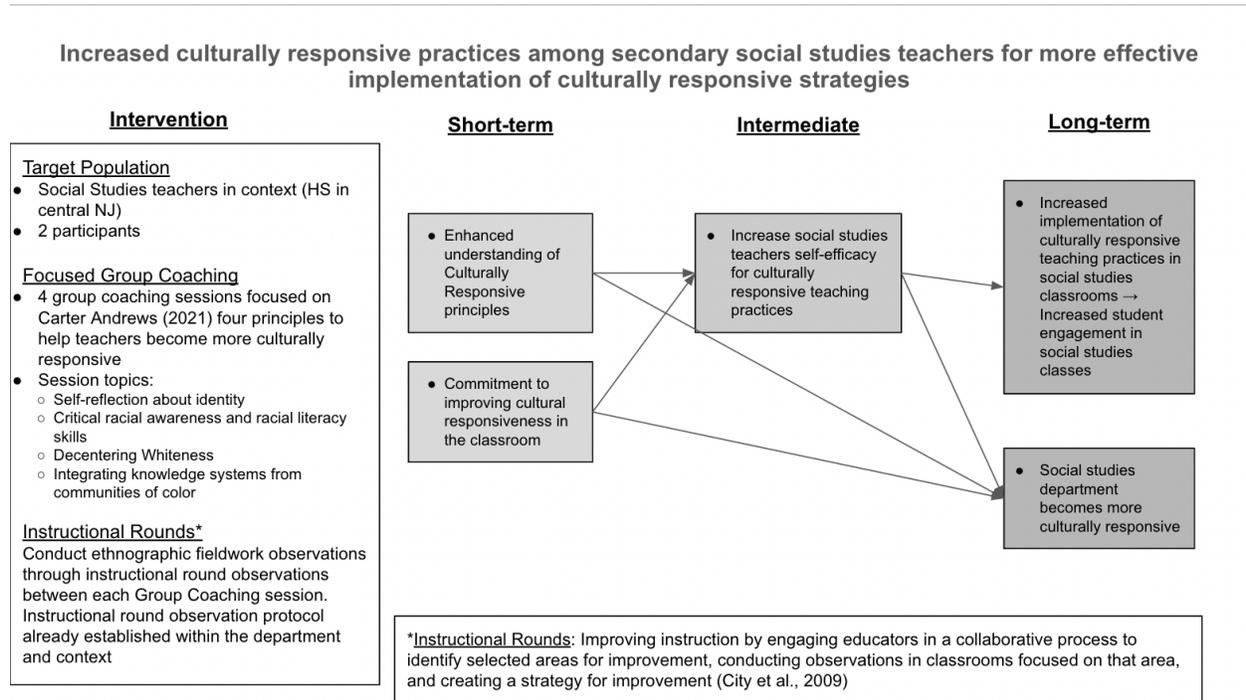
quality of program delivery (Dusenbury et al., 2003). Participant voice was incorporated throughout this process evaluation, as the participants provided quantitative and qualitative data related to their experiences during this intervention.

Participant Responsiveness

The first process component for evaluation was participant responsiveness (Dusenbury et al., 2003), which allowed me to determine how engaged the participants were throughout the intervention based on their participation in the activities (Dusenbury et al., 2003). In this research, this was measured by me through observations of the facilitator, specifically focused on the engagement of participants in each session, and interaction with other participants. Participants were also asked to self-report their engagement during the coaching sessions using a self-report survey asking them about engagement during each coaching session (Dusenbury et al., 2003). Each session was audio-recorded, and those data were coded using the following a priori codes: percent of talking by person (participant vs. facilitator), level of questions asked (higher order questions), and the quality of responses to questions posed. This process evaluation assessed the engagement of the participants throughout the intervention, which is an important element in the theory of treatment and logic model. In the treatment theory, participant engagement is the foundation for achieving any outcomes projected in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2

Theory of Treatment



In the logic model, participant engagement is a factor in the process input section in order to achieve the desired short-term, intermediate, and distal outcomes (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3

Logic Model

Context	Processes		Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Studies teachers in context (HS in central NJ) • An initial review of data from the needs assessment indicates that teachers have varied interpretations of culturally responsive teaching practices, which leads to various strategies implemented in social studies classrooms. • This intervention seeks to break down Carter Andrews' (2021) four principles of cultural responsiveness in teaching, and coach a small group of participants on those principles, ultimately helping create more culturally responsive social studies teachers in this context. 	<p>Inputs</p>	<p>Outputs</p>	<p>Short-Term</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four 1-hour focused group coaching sessions with group of participants • Four sets of Instructional Rounds observations per participant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 1 hour before coaching sessions begin, then Instructional Round Observations after each coaching session to evaluate implementation of previous coaching session) • Information and/or activities to guide the group coaching sessions related to the four principles to help teachers become more culturally responsive • Buy-in and participation from members of the social studies department, as well as social studies supervisor 	<p>Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group of 2 participants - high school social studies teachers to participate in both the focused group coaching and instructional rounds <p>Activities</p> <p>Focused Group Coaching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 group coaching sessions focused on Carter Andrews (2021) four principles to help teachers become more culturally responsive • Coaching sessions will be led by researcher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Each session will begin with everyone sharing what was observed during the Instructional Round observations • Session topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Self-reflection about identity ◦ Critical racial awareness and racial literacy skills ◦ Decentering Whiteness ◦ Integrating knowledge systems from communities of color <p>Instructional Round Observations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct ethnographic fieldwork observations through instructional round observations between each Group Coaching session. Protocol already established within the department and context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ All participants will participate in all Instructional Round observations ◦ *Instructional Rounds: Improving instruction by engaging educators in a collaborative process to identify selected areas for improvement, conducting observations in classrooms focused on that area, and creating a strategy for improvement (City et al., 2009) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced understanding of Culturally Responsive principles • Commitment to improving cultural responsiveness in the classroom (Fitchett et al., 2012) <p>Intermediate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase social studies teachers' self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching practices. <p>Distal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices in social studies classrooms → Increased student engagement in social studies classes (Cruz et al., 2020) • Social studies department becomes more culturally responsive
<p>Assumptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social studies teachers in this context are willing to participate in both focused group coaching sessions and Instructional Rounds • Teachers engage in self-reflection throughout entire intervention process • Teachers apply what they learn in focused group coaching into their classrooms 	<p>External Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers' limited participation due to time constraints • Current district-wide PD on CLR training has had negative impact on teachers and willingness to participate in activities related to this topic 		

Fidelity of Implantation—Adherence

The next process component for evaluation was fidelity of implementation—adherence, which assessed my design of the intervention and specifically examined the extent to which each session focused on the predetermined topics (Dusenbury et al., 2003). Fidelity of implementation examined the program and how closely it aligned with the intention of that program (Dusenbury et al., 2003). This component specifically measured adherence as an element of fidelity of implementation, which examined the consistency of the programs and activities designed with the researcher's intention (Dusenbury et al., 2003). This was measured by my analysis of audio recordings, which was coded by the facilitator and focused on the topics covered: self-reflection, racial literacy, decentering Whiteness, and centering experiences and knowledge of racially,

ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse individuals and groups (Carter Andrews, 2021). Additionally, audio-recordings of instructional round observation debriefs were transcribed and coded. High fidelity for this component would include high support from the administration of this context, as well as positive attitudes from the participating teachers and the ability of the facilitator to create useful and appropriate materials (Dusenbury et al., 2003). The creation of the intervention is identified in the theory of treatment in the intervention component (see Figure 4.2), as well as the inputs and outputs: activities sections of the logic model (see Figure 4.3).

Quality of Program Delivery

The third process component for evaluation was the quality of program delivery, which examined how effectively the participants viewed the content of the activities (Dusenbury et al., 2003). This component assessed the participants' perception of the clarity and engagement of the coaching sessions and was measured by the participants' responses to qualitative items on a self-report survey following their participation in this study. Although not specifically identified in the theory of treatment (see Figure 4.2), this component is evident through the outcomes of the intervention as the participants' perception of the effectiveness of the activities during the small-group coaching sessions would impact their understanding of culturally responsive teaching strategies and their confidence in implementing new strategies in their classrooms. Additionally, this process component is evident in the logic model (Figure 4) in the outcomes section, as the outcomes listed depend on how effective the participants would find the content and activities of the intervention.

Process Evaluation Indicators

This process evaluation evaluated participant responsiveness, fidelity of implementation—adherence, and quality of program delivery of this intervention. The indicators

measured participant responsiveness through engagement by individuals during each small-group coaching session, the extent to which participants talked during the session, the quality of their responses and questions during the session, and the topic of contributions. Fidelity of implantation—adherence was measured through the predetermined topics: self-reflection, racial literacy, acknowledging the presence of Whiteness and decentering it, and centering experiences and knowledge of racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse individuals and groups (Carter Andrews, 2021). The quality of program delivery was measured by the participants' perception of the clarity and engagement of the coaching sessions.

Engagement of Participants

This indicator measured participant responsiveness (Dusenbury et al., 2003) through engagement by individuals during each small-group coaching session, the extent to which participants talked during the session, their quality of responses and questions during the session, and topic of contributions. This indicator obtained data from my facilitation of each small-group coaching session, and the participants (teachers). These data were collected during each of the four small-group coaching sessions and utilized observations from the facilitator focused on the engagement of participants in each session and interaction with other participants. Data were also collected via audio recordings of each small-group coaching session, which were then coded using the following a priori codes: percent of talking by person (participant vs. facilitator), level of questions asked by participants (higher order questions, and the quality of responses to questions posed. Data were also collected via the participants during a brief, qualitative self-report survey following the completion of coaching sessions. This indicator aligns with the treatment theory and logic model by measuring the engagement of the participants to achieve the desired outcomes.

Adherence to Session Topics

This indicator measured fidelity of implantation—adherence (Dusenbury et al., 2003) through the predetermined topics of self-reflection, understanding race as a social phenomenon, acknowledging the presence of Whiteness, and center experiences and knowledge of racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse individuals and groups, and five instructional rounds following each small-group coaching session. This indicator obtained data from my observations, collected during each of the four small-group coaching sessions, and logs were completed after each instructional round. Audio recordings of each small-group coaching session were coded by the facilitator and focused on the predetermined topics covered in each session: self-reflection, understanding race as a social phenomenon, acknowledging the presence of Whiteness, and center experiences and knowledge of racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse individuals and groups (Carter Andrews, 2021). Additionally, observation logs were maintained for each instructional round and divided by each participating teacher. This indicator aligns with the treatment theory and logic model through the inputs and activities of the logic model, which outline the construction of the small-group coaching sessions and instructional rounds.

Perception of Clarity and Engagement

This indicator measured the quality of program delivery (Dusenbury et al., 2003) through the participants' perception of the clarity and engagement of the coaching sessions. This indicator obtained qualitative data from the participating teachers following each small-group coaching session. These data were collected via a survey containing qualitative items. Examples of qualitative items include participants' level of engagement during coaching sessions, clarity of content for each coaching session, and level of confidence in participants' ability to implement

culturally responsive teaching practices. This indicator aligns with the treatment theory and logic model by evaluating the participants' perceptions of each small-group coaching session, identified in the inputs section of the logic model.

Outcome Evaluation

The following questions evaluated the outcome of this intervention:

1. How did the participants use culturally responsive practices in their classrooms throughout this study?
2. How did participants characterize their self-efficacy during the pilot study?

This study utilized qualitative design and data analysis. This design was appropriate as I conducted observations and ethnographic fieldwork. This study examined only one group (no control group) and contained only a posttest, so I utilized a one-group posttest only design (Shadish et al., 2002). As there was no pretest for this study, comparing changes based on treatment was not possible. However, a baseline did exist as quantitative measures were implemented during the needs assessment, allowing me to gauge a baseline level of self-efficacy for cultural responsiveness in this population. The populations did not match the needs assessment data, so this could not be considered a pretest. For the one-group posttest only design, Shadish et al. (2002) noted that nearly all threats to internal validity have the potential to disrupt this study. Two specific threats to the validity of this study are addressed in the following section.

Strengths and Limitations of Design

Qualitative research design is beneficial by allowing researchers to examine smaller sample sizes in more detail (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Additionally, qualitative data are often collected in naturalistic settings and seeks to center the voices and perspectives of the

participants (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Qualitative research designs operate under the constructivist paradigm, which acknowledges the existence of multiple truths and realities and the social construction of knowledge (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017); those realities and truths can be understood from the perspectives of participants, rather than the researcher. However, for research that addresses topics such as race or culture, researchers should engage in reflexivity to examine their own biases (Milner, 2007) and understand how those biases might impact the research (Banks, 2015). Additionally, qualitative research designs allow researchers to identify potential solutions to problems, which a purely quantitative design does not allow (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). It was appropriate for this pilot study to utilize a qualitative research design due to the emphasis on the voices and experiences of the participants.

Limitations of qualitative research designs are that the results are more difficult to generalize, and the potential exists for researcher bias to impact the analysis of data (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Although qualitative findings may have lower credibility and are more difficult to generalize, there are methods to determine the trustworthiness of qualitative data (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2005). To determine the transferability of qualitative data, similar to the generalizability of quantitative data, researchers can be sure to provide thick and rich description of the context of the study. This allows for an understanding of the setting and context in which the research took place. To establish credibility, the researcher can utilize triangulation of multiple data sets and member-checking to ensure the truth in the data, similar to quantitative internal validity (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

I was most concerned with two threats to validity: selection and reactivity to the experimental situation (Shadish et al., 2002). As my recruitment of participants asked for

volunteers to commit to this intervention, selecting participants could have potentially threatened validity. The teachers who volunteered to participate in this research were most likely actively seeking professional development outside of what was provided by the district and were therefore not representative of the general social studies teacher population, who only attended required professional development. Additionally, the sample size for this intervention was small, limited to two participants due to constraints of the context. However, there was an additional option for participation in this pilot study; others interested in participating in this study were invited to attend the coaching sessions with the hope of drawing comparisons between the two participant groups and determining the role of instructional round observations in this intervention. Unfortunately, no additional participants selected this option, so this study consisted of the two participants who participated in the coaching sessions and instructional round observations. This small sample size potentially reduced the ability to determine the statistical significance of the research.

The participants may also have tried to say or act in ways they thought I wanted to see. For example, the participants were made aware that this research focused on how they implement culturally responsive teaching practices. As a result of this knowledge, participants could have tried to incorporate more culturally responsive teaching practices than they typically would have because they thought that was what I wanted to see. In order to mitigate these possible threats to validity, I was sure to state that the purpose of this research was to examine how culturally responsive teaching practices are currently utilized in social studies classrooms. Additionally, I was sure to state that participation in this research was available to all teachers and explained that participants could expect to develop culturally responsive teaching skills by participating in this research.

Method

The context of this qualitative study was the social studies department of a public high school located in a mid-Atlantic state in the United States. This school serves approximately 2,200 students of varying racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity. This section outlines the participants, methods, and procedures for this pilot study.

Participants

Due to constraints dictated by the context, participants for this study were chosen based on schedule availability that did not require coverage for them to participate in the instructional round observations. Therefore, participation in the full pilot study was limited to two participants who had schedules compatible with my own. However, another option was included for individuals in this context who wished to participate in the coaching session element of this study, which would allow for comparison between the two groups and examine the role of the instructional round observations in this study. Unfortunately, no individuals volunteered to participate for the coaching session-only option, so the number of participants remained two.

The participants in this study were two White high school social studies teachers. The first participant, Alex, is certified in both secondary social studies and special education. He has taught for 10 years, all within this context; his experience includes co-teaches inclusion classes and small-group instruction classes consisting of high-needs students. At the beginning of this study, Alex was willing to learn and be vulnerable about his limitations. He was very vocal and engaged throughout the study. The second participant, Sam, is certified in secondary social studies. She has 3 years of teaching experience and began teaching in this context during the 2019–2020 school year when this context pivoted to remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She co-teaches English as a Second Language (ESL) level classes with an ESL

teacher and also teaches several sections of an AP course. At the beginning of this study, Sam was reflective and took time to think before speaking; her passion for supporting her students was evident, and she had more experience with professional development related to culturally responsive teaching due to her previous role on the committee for turnkeying cultural and linguistic responsiveness strategies from other professional development.

Measures

This study examined the use of peer coaching sessions and instructional round observations in supporting teachers' self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching practices. This section describes the instruments and measures utilized during this study, including pre- and post-interviews, peer coaching sessions, instructional round observations, and self-report qualitative survey.

Pre- and Post-Interviews

Interviews conducted before and after participation in this study examined perceptions of culturally responsive teaching and self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching practices. The pre-interview protocol (see Appendix C) focused on topics related to culturally responsive teaching identified in the needs assessment as unclear or lacking clarity; question topics include understandings of identity and resulting impact on decisions made in the classroom, which voices and perspectives are valued in education, and approaches to teaching about race and racism in the classroom. The post-interview protocol (see Appendix D) focused on topics related to understanding of culturally responsive teaching practices, self-efficacy for implementing culturally responsive teaching practices, and perceptions of engagement during coaching sessions.

Peer Coaching Sessions

This study consisted of four peer-coaching sessions designed to allow participants to engage in conversations about various culturally responsive teaching strategies related each coaching session topic. Topics for each coaching session were guided by Carter Andrews's (2021) principles for enhancing culturally responsive teaching. Coaching session topics focused on self-reflection about identity, critical racial awareness and racial literacy skills, decentering Whiteness, and integrating knowledge systems from communities of color (Carter Andrews, 2021). Peer coaching was selected for this study due to the emphasis on self-reflection teachers engage in to examine current practices and share ideas and strategies to address an identified issue (Donegan et al., 2000). As there is no standard protocol for coaching in education (Poglinco et al., 2003), this measure allowed for flexibility and a fusion of expert coaching and reciprocal (Donegan et al., 2000) throughout each session. Each session was formatted by introducing the topic of the session, discussing key terms or concepts related to that session, and engaging in a dialogue about current practices related to that topic. Participants were then asked to examine their current practice and identify one way to change or alter their current practice to incorporate elements from that session's topic. Each session ended by examining and discussing the rubric to be used in the following instructional round observation.

Instructional Round Observations

This study consisted of four sets of instructional round observations held directly after the coaching sessions described above in order to observe implementations of strategies and practices identified in that coaching session. The purpose of utilizing instructional rounds in education is to promote best practices across classrooms and within an organization by allowing continuous learning through observation and collaboration (City et al., 2009). Instructional

coaches in this school have utilized instructional round observations prior to this study; Alex had previously participated in instructional rounds within this context, while Sam had no prior experience with instructional rounds. These instructional round observations followed the four-step protocol described by Del Prete (2013); this protocol includes identifying the problem of practice, ensuring all participants understand the problem of practice, physical observations, or rounds, conducted in classrooms, and a post-round reflection where all participants share their notes collected during the observations. Each instructional round observation was guided by a rubric that allowed participants to look for specific actions from the teacher and students. These rubrics (see Appendix F) were developed by the Massachusetts Department of Education to help guide more culturally responsive practices in the classroom; the culturally responsive teaching rubrics were largely inspired by Hammond's (2014) book *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*. These rubrics (see Appendix F) allow observers to identify specific actions by both students and teacher, but also allows teachers to self-assess their practice. The list of observable actions on each rubric are examples of actions that fall under the umbrella of the specific culturally-responsive category of each rubric. Each rubric focuses on one of four identified categories of culturally-responsive teaching: content, instruction, culture, and interpersonal. Each rubric was utilized once following the coaching session most related to that category; the interpersonal rubric was utilized following the coaching session focused on self-reflection about identity, the instruction rubric was utilized following the coaching session focused on racial literacy skills, the content rubric was utilized following the coaching session focused on decentering Whiteness, and the culture rubric was utilized following the coaching session focused on centering knowledge systems from communities of color.

Self-Report Survey

Participants completed a brief, three-question qualitative self-report survey following their post-interview. These questions were administered via Qualtrics and asked participants to examine their participation in this study. The questions asked were: “explain your level of engagement during each coaching session”; “do you feel the content of each coaching session was clear and adhered to the topic identified for that session?”; and “do you feel more confident in your ability to implement culturally-responsive teaching practices?”

Procedure

This section will provide an overview of the intervention, including the timeline for implementation, data collection, and data analysis. Intervention timeline breaks down each component of the intervention and describe each component. The data collection section explains the ways data were collected, and the data analysis explains how the qualitative data from this research were analyzed.

Intervention Timeline

This intervention occurred over 5 weeks, including the pre-interviews, four coaching sessions, four sets of instructional round observations, post-interviews, and self-report surveys. The pre- and post-interviews and coaching sessions occurred after contractual hours, and the instructional round observations took place during the school day. Each set of instructional round observations included two observations: both participants observed each other’s classrooms and my classroom. Each coaching session lasted approximately 30–40 minutes, and each instructional round observation lasted for no longer than 20 minutes. During each coaching session, participants were introduced to the topic for that session, given a guiding question for the session, and provided with a brief explanation of any key terms related to that topic,

supported by literature. Participants then were asked to reflect on their own practice and share responses to questions posed during the session. Each session also included a specific activity that I modeled, and participants were asked to discuss how they would incorporate the content or specific activity in their own classroom. At the end of each coaching session, one rubric from the Massachusetts Department of Education Culturally Responsive Teaching Rubric (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2021) was introduced to guide the instructional round observations. Content for each session was influenced by Carter Andrews’s (2021) principles for enhancing culturally responsive teaching. The lesson plans for each coaching session can be found in Appendix E. Table 4.1 shows a timeline for the intervention. The dates for the coaching sessions were disrupted by a week-long break, followed by a window of standardized testing.

Table 4.1

Intervention Timeline

Activity	Date	Duration	Description
Pre-interviews	March 14, 2023	15 minutes each	Researcher conducted pre-interviews with each participant to establish understandings of culturally-responsive teaching practices
Coaching sessions	March 21, 2023 March 27, 2023 March 31, 2023 April 24, 2023	40 minutes each	Researcher led sessions designed to guide participants through enhancing understandings and self-efficacy for culturally-responsive teaching practices
Instructional round observations	March 22, 2023 March 28, 2023 April 13, 2023 April 26, 2023	20 minutes each	Each participant observed in the classroom of the researcher and the other participant for 20 minutes, total of eight observations for each participant
Self-report survey	April 27, 2023	10 minutes	Participants completed qualitative survey to self-report on their level of engagement and understanding of topics during coaching sessions
Post-interviews	April 28, 2023	15 minutes each	Researcher conducted post-interviews with each participant to observe changes in

Each coaching session focused on one of the four principles for enhancing culturally responsive teaching: self-reflection, racial literacy, decentering Whiteness, and centering experiences and knowledge of racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse individuals and groups (Carter Andrews, 2021). Each coaching session was followed by a set of instructional round observations to examine how the participants incorporated what was discussed in the coaching session. Each set of instructional round observations was scheduled to occur within 1 or 2 days following the coaching session; one set of instructional round observations occurred later than anticipated due to a week-long break in this context. The self-report survey and post-interviews were scheduled immediately following completion in this study.

Data Collection

Data collected for this study included qualitative sources only. Table 4.2 includes the timeline for data collection.

Table 4.2

Data Collection Timeline

Activity	Timeline	Description
Pre-interview	March 14, 2023	Interviews conducted with each participant were audio-recorded and transcribed with Otter.ai
Coaching sessions (Audio-recorded)	March 21, 2023 March 27, 2023 March 31, 2023 April 24, 2023	Each coaching session was audio-recorded and transcribed using Otter.ai
Survey	April 27, 2023	Participants completed qualitative self-report survey via Qualtrics

Pre- and Post-Interviews

Pre- and post-interviews were conducted with each participant. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed using Otter.ai. Each interview was semi-structured and lasted between 15 and 20 minutes. Each interview was conducted outside of contractual hours.

Coaching Sessions

Each coaching session was audio-recorded and transcribed using Otter.ai. Each coaching session lasted approximately 40 minutes. Like the interviews above, the coaching session was conducted outside of contractual hours.

Instructional Round Observations

Each participant submitted a paper copy of the culturally-responsive teaching rubric used during each instructional round observation. Participants took notes on each rubric and checked off action items observed during each set of instructional rounds. Debriefs of each set of instructional rounds occurred at the beginning of the next coaching session and were audio-recorded and transcribed using Otter.ai.

Self-Report Survey

This qualitative survey was administered following the final set of instructional round observations, and prior to the post-interview. This survey was administered via Qualtrics and included three reflection questions asking the participants to self-report on their level of engagement during each coaching session and reflect on their understanding of the topics discussed in each coaching session and their self-efficacy for implementing culturally-responsive teaching practices.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected during this study was analyzed using a priori and emergent coding (Saldaña, 2012) and a conventional content analysis approach (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). A priori codes were predetermined based on topics specifically addressed in the questions of the pre- and post-interviews, as well as content from the coaching sessions; emergent, or inductive, coding was then utilized to determine additional codes that emerged throughout the coding process. After the initial process of identifying a priori codes, I read and reread the transcripts of each interview, coaching session, and self-report survey to identify key phrases used by the participants to identify emergent codes (Miles et al., 2014). Once I identified codes, I created descriptions for each code and identified example quotations from the transcripts (Appendix G).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is a central feature of studies with of qualitative data. Trustworthiness can be established through determining dependability, confirmability, credibility, and transferability of the findings (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Guba, 1981). Dependability establishes the reliability of the findings to ensure that findings would be similar if this study were repeated (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Establishing validity through confirmability ensures findings are reflective of participants' experiences (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In qualitative research, researchers should engage in reflexivity to limit biased interpretations of the participants' responses (Milner, 2007). Reflexivity can be established through member checks where participants are provided with transcripts of interviews and sessions to ensure their experiences and perspectives were accurately captured (Golafshani, 2003), thus indicating credibility of the findings (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In qualitative research, researchers need to provide rich descriptions of the context to establish specific influencing factors that contributed to any

findings or outcomes of the study to determine if they would apply in other contexts, thus establishing transferability (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Researcher Positionality

As a researcher conducting research amongst my own colleagues and peers, I identify with the indigenous-insider category identified by Banks (2015) as I am a member of the social studies teacher community in this district and share similar beliefs and values related to culturally responsive teaching practices. Threats to trustworthiness related to power were minimized as I do not hold any institutional power over my colleagues and their participation in this research was entirely voluntary. Additionally, as a White female teaching primarily racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse students, I believe my professional responsibilities include engaging in reflexivity (Milner, 2007) to examine my own biases and examine how they influence my pedagogical choices in the classroom. I acknowledge that my identity plays a significant role in shaping my experiences; reflecting on my identity and the privilege I have as a result influences my interpretations of the world and the content I teach my students. Engaging in reflexivity about my identity and experiences and the impact on my teaching practice has allowed me to critically reflect on the lens through which I view the world and the content I teach and incorporate culturally responsive teaching practices to make learning more meaningful and reflective for the students I teach. In conducting this research, I asked my participants to engage in a similar process to examine their own biases and how their identities may influence the pedagogical decisions they make.

Chapter 5

Findings and Discussion

This chapter provides the process of implementation of this study, discussion of findings, limitations of this study, and implications for future research. Findings indicate the success of my intervention as a useful approach for effective professional learning that is active and engaging for participants. The peer coaching sessions were useful in allowing participants to explore the recommended culturally responsive teaching practices and strategies in an environment they felt comfortable to engage in, while the instructional round observations offered opportunities to examine implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices through observing both teacher and student actions.

Process of Implementation

This study occurred over 5 weeks, beginning mid-March 2023 and ending at the end of April 2023; this time period includes a week-long break where schools were closed in this context. This study included two participants, both certified secondary social studies teachers in this context. An alternative participation was offered to other individuals in the context who wished to participate in the coaching sessions only, but there were no volunteers. The intervention period consisted of a pre-interview with each participant, four coaching sessions, four sets of instructional round observations, a post-interview with each participant, and completion of a self-report survey (see Table 4.1).

Pre-Interviews

Once participants were identified for this intervention study, a pre-interview was scheduled with each participant. Pre-interviews were approximately 15–20 minutes long, and the interview protocol outlined three questions to cover; potential follow-up questions were also

included in the interview protocol. The questions asked in this pre-interview focused on participants' current understandings of culturally-responsive teaching, as well as their self-efficacy for implementing culturally-responsive practices in their classrooms.

Session 1

The first session began with a brief overview of the coaching sessions and instructional round observations. The topics for each coaching session were introduced, based on the four principles of enhancing culturally responsive teaching strategies discussed by Carter Andrews (2021). This first coaching session focused on guiding the participants through self-reflection about their identities and how that influences the decisions they make in their classrooms (Carter Andrews, 2021). The first activity asked participants to reflect on what the term *pedagogy* means to them; after a brief discussion, I shared Tintiango-Cubale's (2014) definition of pedagogy, "a philosophy of education informed by positionalities, ideologies, and standpoint of both teacher and learner," with participants. Next, participants were asked why teachers should engage in self-reflection about their identity. To guide this conversation, I shared S. Duckworth's (2020) recreation of the wheel of power and privilege (*Canadian Council for Refugees, 2023*) and asked the participants to identify three wedges on the wheel and describe where their identity fell within the wedge. After a discussion about categories on the wheel and the varying levels of power based on those identities, the participants reflected on how their identity influenced their teaching practice. Participants discussed how they could engage in conversations about power and privilege in their classrooms with their students. The last element of the coaching session asked participants to reflect on how they viewed Whiteness manifested in schools, curriculum, and classrooms. I then guided participants through a brainstorm session about how they, as White educators, could remove Whiteness from their classrooms. This session ended with an

overview of the culturally responsive teaching rubric that would guide the instructional round observation. This rubric focused on interpersonal culturally responsive teaching strategies (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2021), and included teacher and student actions to observe during the observation. The participants were asked to identify one teacher action and one student action that stood out to them; this could be an action they wanted to incorporate in their classroom, or an action they thought was important.

Session 2

The next coaching session began with a reflection on the instructional round observation using the interpersonal section of the culturally responsive teaching rubric (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2021). Participants were asked to look over their notes from the instructional rounds observations and share out examples of teacher or student actions identified on the rubric. Participants shared that it was evident that students felt safe in each classroom due to mutual respect between students and teacher as evidenced through ample student participation. Both participants identified that establishing relationships with students was essential to creating a safe classroom space and believed that both participants' classroom and my classroom had evidence of these relationships.

After the instructional round debrief, the topic for this coaching was introduced: racial literacy skills (Carter Andrews, 2021). Participants discussed the terms *colorblindness* and *racial literacy* before considering the guiding question for this session, “how does racism operate within our school and the content we teach”? The definition shared for *colorblindness* was teachers actively ignoring and seeing race to promote a race-neutral approach (Frankenberg, 1997; Galman et al., 2010; Leonardo, 2008). I used King et al.'s (2018) definition for *racial literacy*: “enabling people to understand that the way race is defined can change and is highly

malleable based on geographic and temporal considerations” (King et al., 2018). I then introduced the LET’S ACT framework (King et al., 2018) as a tool to guide explore controversial topics in the classroom and help develop students’ racial literacy skills in the classroom. Each of the seven steps of the framework was presented: (a) love and listen, (b) enlighten and educate, (c) talk, (d) scribe, (e) analyze systems, (f) conclude through deliberation, and (g) take action (King et al., 2018). This framework incorporates several elements of culturally responsive teaching, including reflection, analyzing systems, and discussion. As the rubric for this set of instructional round observations focused on instructional practices. This framework provided participants specific strategies to make their practice more culturally responsive. Participants were asked to identify a controversial topic they already address in their classroom and apply the LET’S ACT framework (King et al., 2018) to that lesson. Finally, the next culturally responsive teaching rubric was introduced for the next set of instructional round observations; this rubric focused on instructional practices (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2021). Participants were asked to identify one teacher action and one student action they wanted to focus on.

Session 3

The third coaching session began with a reflection of observations during instructional rounds using the instruction culturally responsive teaching rubric (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2021). Sam noted that the teacher actions listed on this rubric seemed to indicate “good teaching.” Alex shared that they felt this particular rubric did not allow for different types of classrooms; he shared that the action on the rubric, “facilitating student interaction,” would look different in a special education classroom than an AP classroom. Sam compared the culturally responsive teaching rubrics (see Appendix F) with those of the Danielson rubrics

utilized by this context for teacher observation (Danielson Group, 2022), and identified that the Danielson rubric often lacks inclusive language and does not account for variations in student performance.

The topic for this coaching session focused on decentering Whiteness (Carter Andrews, 2021). The guiding question for this session was examining what we could do as educators to decenter Whiteness in social studies classrooms. Participants were asked to think about how they see Whiteness in education at various levels, including the entire education system, this specific context, and classrooms. Both participants agreed that a lot of social studies content tends to emphasize a White, Euro-centric lens, and that White educators tend to rely on sources coming from a White lens. Alex noted that the curriculum and sources used in social studies classrooms can send mixed messages to students about what history is important. For example, Alex noted the emphasis on months for specific groups, such as Black history month, LGBTQ+ month, Asian American Pacific Islander month, and so on; if teachers do not actively incorporate these voices and perspectives throughout their curriculum, then it could send the message to students that those groups are not valued outside of those months. Sam shared that much of American societal and cultural norms are rooted in Whiteness, so schools would likely reflect that. Sam gave the example of school rules and policies related to behavior, discipline, and dress code being rooted in Whiteness.

After this conversation, participants were asked to identify one concept or piece of content in their curriculum that centers Whiteness and create a lesson that would decenter Whiteness on that topic. Alex shared an activity used in the United States History II curriculum that examines how various groups within the United States were affected by World War II, and that one of the documents groups Mexican Americans and Asian Americans together into

sharing the same experience. Alex indicated in order to make this lesson less about centering the White experience, there needed to more perspectives and documents about racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse groups woven throughout the entire unit to prevent isolating their experience to this one activity. The final element of this coaching session was introducing the next culturally responsive teaching rubric that focused on content (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2021). Participants were asked to identify one teacher action and one student action they wanted to focus on.

Session 4

The final coaching session began with a debrief of the previous set of instructional round observations using the content culturally responsive teaching rubric (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2021). Both participants noted that they felt this rubric included more actions related to classroom management rather than content. Sam noted that many of the teacher actions identified on this rubric were actions that teachers could do to prepare for the lesson as opposed to actions during the actual teaching of the lesson. Alex agreed with this observation and noted that it seemed like many of the teacher actions could be done to lessons that already existed, but incorporate specific elements related to the student population in the classroom to help increase student interest and engagement.

This final coaching session focused on centering knowledge from communities of color (Carter Andrews, 2021). The guiding question for this lesson was how educators can incorporate and center the knowledge of students. Although the specific recommendation Carter Andrews (2021) discusses is centering the knowledge from communities, I chose to focus on students' knowledge as a way to emphasize student experiences; however, students' knowledge and experiences may reflect community knowledge. To begin the conversation, I posed two

questions for the participants to discuss: In what ways do teachers value student knowledge, and how do you incorporate student knowledge into your classroom? Sam discussed how teaching ESL classes, classes only comprised of students designated as English Language Learners, look very different than traditional general education classes because of the student identities. She mentioned that teachers could also learn from their students about what is important to them and design lessons and activities that would be relevant to the students they teach. Alex suggested asking students directly what they want to learn about and what knowledge they already have related to topics discussed in the classroom. I introduced the concept funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) and defined it as the knowledge students can bring into the classroom from their home and personal lives based on the experiences and knowledge learned from their families and communities.

The final activity of this coaching session was asking participants to consider their experience in participating in the coaching sessions and instructional round observations and examine how their understanding of culturally responsive teaching changed. The final element of this coaching session was introducing the next culturally responsive teaching rubric that focused on culture (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2021). Participants were asked to identify one teacher action and one student action they wanted to focus on.

Post-Interviews and Self-Report Survey

Following the four coaching sessions and four sets of instructional round observations, participants were asked to complete a qualitative survey, and individual interviews were conducted with each participant to determine how their understandings and implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices changed, as well as their self-efficacy for implementing these practices. The self-report survey consisted of three open-ended questions:

1. Explain your level of engagement during each coaching session.
2. Do you feel the content of each coaching session was clear and adhered to the topic of that session?
3. Do you feel more confident in your ability to implement culturally responsive teaching practices? Explain.

Individual interviews were conducted with each participant and audio-recorded. Each interview consisted of three questions; however, follow-up questions were asked if needed. The post-interview protocol (see Appendix D) focused on topics related to understanding of culturally responsive teaching practices, self-efficacy for implementing culturally responsive teaching practices, and perceptions of engagement during coaching sessions.

Findings

Findings from this qualitative study are discussed below. Findings are organized by process evaluation and outcome evaluation research questions. All qualitative data were transcribed from audio-recordings and coded.

Process Evaluation Research Questions

Question 1: Did Participants Feel Engaged During the Four Small-Group Coaching Sessions?

Participants were asked to self-report their level of engagement during each coaching session to determine participant responsiveness. A priori codes identified to determine level of participant responsiveness include percentage of speaking time during each coaching session and quality of contributions from the participants during coaching sessions. The amount of time each participant spoke in each coaching are listed below (see Table 5.1) by each coaching session:

Table 5.1

Percentage of Speaking Time During Coaching Sessions

	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4
Researcher	38%	33%	43%	47%
Alex	33%	37%	28%	29%
Sam	29%	30%	29%	24%

I spent more time talking than the participants in each coaching session due to introducing the topic of each session, posing questions for reflection, and summarizing what participants contributed. The quality of contributions made by each participant is difficult to quantify, so the emergent codes explained below are indicative of the quality of each participant’s contributions.

Several emergent codes related to engagement during the post-interviews were identified during the coding process: established relationships and time to reflect. According to the open-ended self-report survey completed by each participant following their completion of the intervention program, both participants indicated a high level of engagement during the coaching sessions.

Established Relationships. Both participants felt that the small-group dynamic enhanced engagement during the coaching sessions. Sam indicated that the coaching sessions felt more like conversations among colleagues, rather than top-down instruction. She explained, “I found it very engaging part of it might be because it was a small group. I didn’t feel like I was being talked to; I felt like it was definitely a dialogue and a conversation” (Post-interview, April 28, 2023). She also indicated that the development of personal relationships between me and other participant allowed her to feel more comfortable participating, so she was able to stay better engaged. She indicated, “being able to have a dialogue with colleagues and also with colleagues in leadership positions, I felt like really helped me stay engaged” (Self-report survey, April 27,

2023). Alex discussed the impact this type of professional development could have if more people were involved within each department. However, due to constraints of the context, the number of participants was limited for this study.

Time to Reflect. Both participants mentioned the time provided for them to reflect on the various topics during each coaching sessions helped with their engagement. Alex indicated that he found it helpful to have time to process and think about the topics so he could find ways to apply it to his own practice. He mentioned that the coaching sessions allowed him to have time to process what was discussed and figure out how to apply it to his own practice. Sam compared this intervention program with previous professional development from the district and said that the time for reflection allowed her to determine how to apply elements to her practice; she indicated that, in previous professional development focused on culturally responsive teaching, “we never got any help or any ideas of how to actually address those issues within our classroom” (Post-interview, April 28, 2023), but that this program allowed her time to think about to implement new practices.

Question 2: To What Extent Were the Sessions Focused on the Pre-Determined Topics?

Participants indicated that each session was clear to understand and that the content adhered to the predetermined topic. One code that emerged related to this research question was the clarity of objectives. Participants indicated that the goal of each coaching session was clearly introduced at the beginning of each session and that the objectives and guiding questions for each session were clear.

Clarity of Objectives. Sam indicated the clarity of each coaching session as compared with other professional developments utilized in this context, and stated, “I always walked away from our long sessions feeling really confused, not understanding what the objective was, and

had zero idea of how to actually implement anything into my classroom” (Post-interview, April 28, 2023). She also indicated that the culturally responsive teaching rubrics (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2021; see Appendix F) helped provide clarity for the focus of each instructional round observation following the coaching sessions. She stated:

It really helped me understand what that should look like, and then even having more small group discussions where teachers feel comfortable with each other and there seems to be a more effective and direct objective of what we’re talking about each day. (Post-interview, April 28, 2023)

Both participants indicated that the focus of each coaching session was clear and the activities during each session were aligned to that specific topic.

Outcome Evaluation Research Questions

Question 1: How Did the Participants Use Culturally Responsive Practices in Their Classrooms Throughout This Study?

Throughout this study, I coached participants to incorporate culturally responsive teaching practices in their classrooms. Each coaching session was designed to focus on a specific strategy for enhancing cultural responsiveness, and participants were asked to identify one lesson or topic to modify. Coaching sessions also incorporated activities or strategies the participants already utilized in their classrooms. Participants were asked to identify lessons or activities that aligned with the topic of each coaching session to determine how modifications could be applied to enhance cultural responsiveness. Following each coaching session, instructional round observations were conducted to evaluate the success of the coaching session. A priori codes identified prior to coding include the topics for each coaching session: self-reflection, racial literacy, decentering Whiteness, and centering knowledge from communities of color. Emergent

codes identified during the coding process emphasized specific strategies, including student engagement, critical thinking skills, and strategies for effective teaching.

Self-Reflection. The first coaching session focused on the topic of engaging in self-reflection about identity to understand our individual pedagogical choices in the classroom. Participants observed the wheel of power and privilege from Canadian Council for Refugees (2023) and identified where they believed their identity put them on the wheel. Both participants recognized their positions of power due to their skin color, citizenship, level of education, and language. This activity led participants into a conversation about how this visual could be utilized in their classrooms with their students to support conversations about power and privilege. This visual was reintroduced multiple times throughout each coaching session, and conversations surrounding power and privilege were observed during instructional round observations. For example, during one instructional round observation, Sam was introducing the topic for the lesson and asked the students who they felt had power and whose voices they perceived as powerless. Students engaged in a conversation about how throughout most of U.S. history, those in positions of power were White males, and anyone else had significantly less power. Alex similarly introduced power and privilege in a lesson; instead of asking students to consider who had power, he explicitly addressed who held power during the lesson he was introducing. The lesson was on the topic of changing foreign policy during the Cold War era; while introducing the activity, the teacher explained that the majority of people in power at the time were White men, so students should consider that as they analyzed the various documents. These scenarios indicate the participants' ability to apply strategies from the coaching sessions into their classroom practice, which led to increased student engagement as a result of culturally responsive teaching practices.

Student Engagement. Student engagement was evident throughout each set of instructional round observations. As participants incorporated strategies and practices learned from coaching sessions, high amounts of student engagement were observed. Utilizing the culturally responsive teaching rubrics (Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, 2021; see Appendix F), participants and I noted multiple student actions in response to culturally responsive teaching strategies. For example, the rubric focused on content included student actions of connecting lesson content to real world situations and asking thoughtful questions about the content. These actions were responses to participants' implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices such as encouraging students to examine issues of power and creating an environment where students feel safe to engage and ask questions. In the instructional round debrief at the beginning of coaching session, the participants engaged in a conversation about how student engagement looks different in various classrooms. Alex teaches primarily in-class resource level classes while Sam teaches AP classes; they discussed how students posing higher-order questions and engaging directly with one another is considered high engagement in the AP classroom, whereas students answering questions and participating is considered high engagement in the in-class resource level classroom. Both participants agreed that use of the culturally responsive teaching rubrics during the instructional round observations allowed them to identify student actions as evidence of culturally responsive teaching practices.

Critical Thinking Skills. During the final instructional round debrief, both participants noted that many of the skills and strategies considered culturally responsive promote critical thinking for students. Sam identified student action on the rubrics that align promote critical thinking skills, such as students challenging their own, each other's, or even the teachers' biases and assumptions in a respectful way. Critical thinking skills include the ability to acknowledge

biases in content and documents and challenge them respectfully. When teachers incorporate culturally responsive practices that emphasize critical thinking skills, students are able to demonstrate their ability to practice these skills in the classroom. One example of this was during one set of instructional round observations when students in Sam's classroom were asked to consider historical events from two contrasting perspectives during the Cold War; events included the Cuban Missile Crisis and Bay of Pigs Invasion. Students analyzed two sets of documents for each event; one perspective was from the United States and the other was from Cuba. In the debrief, Alex noted that students were engaging with each other in a respectful way while discussing why the contrasting viewpoints disagreed. Students were able to consider bias of material and engage in thoughtful and respectful conversations about different perspectives and analyze content for bias.

Racial Literacy Skills. One coaching session discussed how racial literacy skills allowed teachers to engage students in conversations about controversial topics in their classrooms (King et al., 2018). A specific framework, LET'S ACT, was broken down and participants applied a current lesson or topic in their curriculum to this framework to help guide students through their development of racial literacy skills. This framework highlighted creating a safe classroom space, active listening, reflection, and creating a plan of action (King et al., 2018). Participants identified a controversial topic in their curriculum and applied this framework. Alex identified a lesson about the atomic bombs used to end World War II, but identified how the lesson already included some elements of the framework, including reflection and analyzing differing perspectives. Sam shared an idea that students could use what they learned to develop a policy surrounding the use for nuclear weapons in present-day and acknowledge the current debates over nuclear weapons. In the instructional round observations following this coaching session,

participants integrated elements from the LET'S ACT framework (King et al., 2018), specifically emphasizing reflection and discussing controversial topics to allow students to examine systems of power and racism.

Strategies for Effective Teaching. Throughout the study, participants discussed how many of the teacher actions on the culturally responsive teaching rubrics (Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, 2021; see Appendix F) should be considered “good teaching” (Coaching session, March 31, 2023). Sam noted that the rubric aligned with content seemed to include teacher actions that occur prior to the lesson, including developing appropriate materials and activities, utilizing sources that represent diverse perspectives, and connecting content to real-world examples, all of which are elements considered “good teaching” for promoting anti-racism and anti-oppressive strategies in the classroom (Dunn, 2021). Alex agreed and shared that sometimes these actions might seem like taking a risk, but if the focus remains on helping students learn, then sometimes it is worth taking the risk in a lesson on a socially controversial topic.

Another strategy the participants discussed was incorporating knowledge of their students' backgrounds and identities into the lesson to choose activities students would feel comfortable with. I asked the participants what benefits exist from incorporating students' funds of knowledge into the classroom. Sam shared that utilizing students' knowledge and experiences, rather than simply checking off items or accomplishing tasks, allows the community in the classroom to develop. Alex agreed that emphasizing the knowledge that students already have also increases buy-in and engagement from the students, which can contribute to developing relationships and helping students feel comfortable in the classroom. The participants were then asked to identify a lesson or activity they could revise to incorporate and center students'

knowledge. Both participants agreed that offering options or choices for activities was one way to center students' knowledge and experience. This would allow them to make connections or use their own knowledge and experiences. Teachers would need to have an understanding of who their students are in order to create these opportunities. Sam shared an activity from the beginning of the year for an ESL class where students are asked to create their own country and identify the type of government and what the set of laws would include. Sam shared that because of many of these students are new to the United States, the activity allows her to understand the contexts and experiences these students had prior to this educational context. This knowledge can then be used to create safe and comfortable learning experiences, and hopefully provide meaningful connections for those students. Additionally, this removes the White-centered lens that much of the curriculum has by emphasizing diverse perspectives.

Decentering Whiteness. The coaching session focused on decentering Whiteness asked participants to begin by examining the ways in which Whiteness is enacted in education. The participants discussed how school policies surrounding discipline and dress code are often blatantly racist against the racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse students that make up the majority of our student population. Sam shared how “American societal norms are rooted in Whiteness, so we expect our societal norms, or I should say, we expect our schools to reflect societal norms, then every set of policies are going to be rooted in Whiteness” (Coaching session, March 21, 2023). This statement led to a conversation between participants on how some of these rules have lessened following the pandemic, and that upholding these racist policies and norms detract from valuable class time. Alex then raised the point of what the purpose of education really is: helping students learn or upholding punitive and discriminatory policies?

The instructional round observations following this coaching session evaluated the participants' ability to decenter Whiteness in their classrooms. Alex implemented the decentering of Whiteness through a lesson about comparing communism, capitalism, and democracy by examining who held power to make decisions affecting government policy at the time. During the debrief in the following coaching session, Sam shared how even a small adjustment to an existing lesson allowed students to feel as though their teacher was aware of issues related to power and Whiteness in the content they were learning. Alex explained that one strategy is to ask students what they already know and if they felt the knowledge they currently have is biased; he explained that a few students will usually express that they feel some of what they have been taught is biased, which opens the door for conversations about different perspectives. As Sam acknowledged, valuing students' perspectives can be significant for students who might hesitate to engage because they perceive their White teacher to be ignorant of Whiteness in the content.

Question 2: How Did Participants Characterize Their Self-Efficacy During the Pilot Study?

Both participants shared that they perceived an increase in confidence in their ability to implement culturally responsive teaching practices as a result of participation in this study. Even though both participants expressed familiarity with culturally responsive teaching prior to this study, the practice of peer coaching followed by instructional rounds led to increased awareness of what culturally responsive teaching incorporates, as well as teacher and student actions that are considered culturally responsive. Sam specifically emphasized the student actions identified on the rubric and stated:

Looking at what students should be doing and what effective implementation and culturally relevant teaching can look like from the student perspective as opposed to just

the focal point on the teacher and the lesson prep that goes into it. (Self-report survey, April 27, 2023)

Alex similarly expressed that the inclusion of student actions in the rubric allowed for the focus to shift from teacher actions to student engagement. Alex also said that these coaching sessions forced him to reflect on the overall goal for teaching. He explained that he understands the goal of teaching is to help students have a good experience in the classroom, and incorporating culturally responsive teaching practices helps achieve this incorporating different aspects of students' identities and helping them see themselves in what they are learning. Sam noted that although she felt she had a solid understanding of what culturally responsive teaching was before participating in this study, she often focused more on the teacher actions rather than the student actions. She explained that the rubrics utilized to guide the instructional round observations helped her recognize that student actions are a significant piece, and that teachers need to focus on sharing power with their students to allow those student actions to occur. Both participants expressed feeling less overwhelmed due to the clear and observable actions listed on the culturally responsive teaching rubrics (Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, 2021).

Additionally, participants expressed that clarity of the coaching sessions and culturally responsive teaching rubrics allowed for increased confidence and understanding of culturally responsive teaching strategies. Both participants compared this program with a professional development program currently utilized in this context and felt more confident in their ability to implement culturally responsive strategies in their classrooms as a result of their participation in this program. Sam stated, "I find that I was walking away from sessions understanding more and being able to like walk away with an idea of okay, this is something I can do in my classroom" (Post-interview, April 28, 2023). Alex expressed that the specific strategies discussed in each

coaching session led to confidence in his ability to modify current lessons or activities to make them culturally responsive. Compared with the other professional development in this context, the participants expressed this program provided opportunities for practicing specific strategies that felt manageable. The participants also expressed a desire for this program to include more participants because they felt teachers in this context would benefit from this type of program that emphasized developing and modifying existing practices to help them become more culturally responsive, rather than the current program utilized in the program that does not acknowledge current practices.

Conclusions

The findings for this study add to existing literature and provide implications for future research surrounding self-efficacy for implementing culturally responsive teaching strategies. Teachers express higher self-efficacy in their ability to implement culturally responsive teaching practices by establishing relationships with students and creating safe classroom environments where students feel comfortable participating (Cruz et al., 2019; Siwatu, 2007). The participants indicated higher self-efficacy in developing relationships with their students as observed through initial pre-interviews and initial conversations during coaching sessions and supported by instructional round observations. The participants also appreciated the student actions identified on the culturally responsive teaching rubrics (Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, 2021) as a way to identify specific student actions that indicate comfort in the classroom, such as asking questions or respectfully engaging in conversations about disagreements. Although the participants had an initial understanding of culturally responsive teaching practices, both indicated an appreciation for new strategies learned during the coaching sessions and instructional round observations. As discussed during several of the instructional round

observation debriefs, the participants acknowledged that their understanding of culturally responsive teaching practices increased as they were exposed to various strategies from the coaching sessions, as well as teacher and student actions listed on the culturally responsive teaching rubrics (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2021) utilized during the instructional round observations. Additionally, participants reported high levels of engagement during the coaching sessions due to the interactive and collaborative structure of each session; participants indicated that a comfortable environment due to previously-established relationships with the other participant and me allowed them to interact and engage throughout each session.

Findings from this study indicate that peer coaching and instructional round observations can be effective in increasing self-efficacy for implementing culturally responsive teaching practices. Allowing time for reflection, conversation amongst colleagues, and practical examples and observable teacher and student actions seemed to help teachers feel more confident in their ability to modify existing lessons to make them more culturally responsive. Additionally, the pre-existing relationship between the two participants and researcher allowed for a comfortable and safe environment for honest conversations to take place. Both participants acknowledged that they felt comfortable engaging in conversations during the coaching sessions due to their existing relationship and felt that this program felt more conversational rather than top-down. Additionally, participants expressed their desire for an expansion of this professional development experience to help other teachers in this context become more culturally responsive in their teaching.

Limitations

This study had several limitations, including the small number of participants, restrictions on scheduling from the administration, and scheduling for the pacing of the intervention. Due to

constraints in the ability to conduct this type of intervention research, this study was limited to two participants. Although additional participants were desired to complete only the coaching session part of the intervention, there were no volunteers. If there had been additional participants for the coaching session, I could compare data from the two groups of participants: those who only participated in the coaching sessions and those who participated in both the coaching sessions and instructional round observations. Additionally, there were limitations on who was eligible to participate due to scheduling. The administration in this context was not able to provide coverage for participants during instructional round observations, only those individuals who co-taught classes or had similar off-periods were able to participate in order to successfully conduct instructional round observations.

Another limitation for this study was the pacing of the intervention program. Traditional instructional round observations in this context would incorporate a debrief session immediately following the observations, but this was impossible due to a lack of coverage for the participants. Thus, the debrief sessions occurred at the beginning of the following coaching session. Sam indicated that the program would be more effective if we were able to debrief immediately following the instructional round observations, and the period between each coaching session and instructional round observation was not as long.

Other potential limitations include the previously-established strong relationship between two participants and me. The participants were also familiar and comfortable with each other before the study, so if this research were to be replicated and the participants did not already have an established relationship, they might not be as comfortable and willing to engage in the coaching sessions; there might need to be additional time spent developing rapport among participants if it did not already exist. If this study were replicated with individuals who did not

have pre-existing personal relationships with each other and the researcher, additional sessions would be needed to establish rapport. Suggestions for these sessions would be focused on community-building activities and social-emotional learning strategies to allow participants and the researcher to feel comfortable with one another. Additionally, this study occurred over a 5-week period, which is relatively short when compared with other similar professional development in this context. Future research could extend this type of professional development over the course of an entire academic year.

Discussion

Findings from this study indicate the successful nature of professional development that incorporates peer coaching and time for reflection and engagement with content. This section will provide an overview of the sociotransformative constructivist framework (Rodriguez, 1998) previously identified and connect findings of this study. Additionally, a discussion of effective strategies for increasing self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching is discussed. Finally, implications for further research are provided.

Sociotransformative Constructivism

The sociotransformative constructivist framework (Rodriguez, 1998) identifies four components to support meaningful learning in the classroom and address issues of social justice: (a) dialogic conversation, (b) authentic activity, (c) metacognition, and (d) reflexivity. These elements guide teachers through eliminating power structures that exist in classrooms that prevent students from learning. In this study, participants engaged in reflexivity and dialogic conversation to examine their own biases that influence the pedagogical choices made in their classrooms. Participants engaged in self-reflection to examine their own power and privilege as a result of their identity and engaged in conversations about how to shift the power away from

teacher-centric classrooms and share power with students. Participants engaged in metacognition (Rodriguez, 1998) through examining their critical consciousness (Freire, 1973) and commitment to social justice, and then engaging students in conversations about the presence of power and systemic racism in the content they learn. Participants examined the cultural and political contexts of their students to incorporate politically-relevant teaching (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 1999; LaRaviere, 2008) and identified strategies to incorporate diverse perspectives. This effort to support student connection to material and content helps students feel seen and valued in their classrooms, an integral component of culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2013; Rychly & Graves, 2012; Tosolt, 2010).

This research indicates that culturally responsive teaching practices incorporate the components of the sociotransformative constructivist framework (Rodriguez, 1998). The emphasis on reflexivity and metacognition aligns with culturally responsive teaching practices by asking teachers to examine their own identity and critically reflect on the choices they make in their classrooms, including whose voices and perspectives are included and whose are left out. Both STC and culturally responsive teaching practices emphasize making learning meaningful for students by considering the identities of students and creating authentic learning activities and encouraging conversations about socially controversial topics that are meaningful for students. Camicia (2008) explored how topics in social studies classrooms are categorized as controversial and found that context and perceptions of power play a significant role in determining whether or not a topic should be designated as controversial. The elements of metacognition and reflexivity of the STC framework allow teachers to analyze approaches to socially controversial topics and incorporate culturally responsive teaching practices in those lessons. Therefore, sociotransformative constructivism (Rodriguez, 1998) is an appropriate

framework for supporting professional learning to increase self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching practices.

Effective Strategies for Increasing Teacher Self-Efficacy for Culturally Responsive

Teaching

Increased teacher self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching practices was measured through participants' self-reporting following participation in this program, supported by researcher observations. Each set of instructional rounds evaluated teacher implementation of culturally responsive teaching strategies discussed during coaching sessions. Although there is limited research about the direct connection between culturally responsive pedagogy professional development and student learning (Sleeter, 2012), Haviland and Rodriguez-Kiino (2009) expressed that any professional development designed to enhance culturally responsive teaching practices should be embedded within teacher practice and occur over an extended period of time. Although context limitations limited the length of this study, the coaching sessions and instructional round observations were embedded within participant's current practice.

This study incorporated elements of effective professional development, including content-specific focus, active learning, coherence, and collaboration for teachers to engage with their colleagues and work to develop new teaching strategies through coaching and feedback (Archibald et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone et al., 2002; Desimone & Garet, 2015). As noted by Donegan et al. (2000), peer coaching is an effective strategy for guiding individuals through self-reflection to examine their current practice, as well as share strategies and collaborate with colleagues. The participants expressed positive feedback for the coaching sessions and often expanded on each other's contributions and strategies. Alex noted, "I was also interested to hear what people had to say, you know, I had personal relationships

already built with the people within my session” (Post-interview, April 28, 2023), attributing her engagement to the existing relationship with Alex and researcher.

Participants reported high levels of engagement throughout this study; throughout each coaching session, participants engaged in thoughtful and reflective dialogue and collaborated with the other participant and me to brainstorm strategies to implement specific elements of culturally responsive teaching. During the final coaching session, participants were introduced to Moll et al.’s (1992) funds of knowledge; although Moll et al.’s (1992) work focuses on family knowledge and personal experiences, this study focused on the knowledge that students bring into the classroom from their home and personal experiences. In their discussion about the significance of incorporating and valuing students’ knowledge, both participants discussed how this strategy shared the power of the classroom with students and made the environment less teacher-centered. Although this study deviated slightly from the original concept of funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992), participants recognized the importance of valuing students’ knowledge and creating space in the classroom for that knowledge.

Participants reported increased self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching practices as a result of their participation in this study. Participants observed one another, as well as the researcher, integrate various culturally responsive strategies and activities in their classrooms, which allowed them to increase their self-efficacy for implementing culturally responsive practices in their own classrooms through vicarious experiences (Bandura, 1977). By building on existing practices and lessons already utilized by these participants, participants’ felt increased self-efficacy through the acknowledgement of current practices, or performance accomplishments (Bandura, 1977). The comfortable atmosphere of the peer-coaching sessions allowed participants to feel supported; during each debrief of the instructional round

observations, participants consistently highlighted examples of culturally responsive practices from the culturally responsive teaching rubrics (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2021) that they had observed in the classrooms. This positive recognition and acknowledgement led to increased self-efficacy through verbal persuasion (Bandura, 1977). Bandura's (1977) final source of self-efficacy, emotional arousal, was evident through the participants' clear passion and dedication to creating a safe and comfortable classroom environment for their students through implementation of culturally responsive strategies. The participants' personal commitment to increasing culturally responsive teaching practices

Based on participants' initial understandings of and self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching, both Alex and Sam demonstrated significant change throughout their participation in this study. Although Alex believed he was less familiar with culturally responsive teaching practices and strategies and described himself as less aware, he demonstrated a wide variety of culturally responsive strategies and practices throughout this study; as he explained in his post-interview, he felt more confident in his ability to modify existing lessons and activities to incorporate culturally responsive practices that he did not initially realize were considered culturally responsive. Throughout his participation in this study, Alex used the self-reflection time to shift the focus from himself to his students; as explained in his post-interview, "How can we tailor this class to help you [students] feel more empowered"? (Post-interview, April 28, 2023). While Alex may have been less familiar and less confident with culturally responsive practices when this study began, his self-efficacy and understanding of culturally responsive practices increased greatly throughout the study. While Sam felt more confident and aware of culturally responsive practices at the beginning of the study, she explained that this study allowed her to feel more intentional about how to implement culturally responsive practices in

the classroom. The use of the culturally responsive rubrics (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2021) for the instructional round observations helped her better understand what student actions were considered culturally responsive and how she could nurture and encourage those actions as a culturally responsive teacher. Sam's passion for creating a culturally responsive classroom environment remained consistent throughout the study, but her self-efficacy for how to achieve that increased greatly. While Sam was more reserved and reflective before speaking during the coaching sessions toward the beginning of the study, her participation became less reserved and more natural towards the final coaching sessions.

Instructional Rounds

Serving as a way to evaluate participants' implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices, instructional round observations allowed the participants and I to witness how various strategies were implemented firsthand. The use of instructional rounds in education is a relatively new practice but offers a way for educators to identify areas of improvement, observe classrooms, and collaborate to create strategies (City et al., 2009). The findings indicate that the use of instructional rounds are an effective professional learning strategy as they engage participants in active learning, content-specific focus, coherence, occur over a period of time, and encourage collaboration (Archibald et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone et al., 2009; Desimone & Garet, 2015). Observations collected from instructional rounds allow individuals to engage in the professional learning process through active participation in both the observation phase and post-round discussion to collaborate with colleagues and determine solutions (Roegman & Riehl, 2012). Culturally responsive teaching practices ask individuals to engage in active reflection about their teaching practice and the pedagogical choices made within their classrooms. Instructional rounds offer opportunities to observe how colleagues implement

various culturally responsive teaching practices and allow for collaboration. Additionally, the emphasis on teacher rounds without administrative participants (Ellis et al., 2015) can allow participating teachers feel more comfortable during the instructional round process as they may already have pre-established relationships with their colleagues, as findings of this study indicate. As explained by the participants in this study, they felt comfortable engaging and conversing with each other and me due to our previous relationships. Although it is difficult to measure if this directly impacted their self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching practices, it certainly allowed for open and honest dialogue in the instructional round debriefs.

The culturally responsive teaching rubrics (see Appendix F) used to guide the instructional round observations in this study were developed by the Massachusetts Department of Education to help guide more culturally responsive practices in the classroom, inspired by Hammond's (2014) book *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*. Participants expressed appreciation for the rubrics' inclusion of both teacher and student actions for each indicator and felt that the actions on these rubrics indicated "good teaching" (Coaching session, April 24, 2023) and contributed to a "deepened an understanding of what how culturally relevant teaching can be implemented into the classroom" (Post-interview, April 28, 2023). Sam shared appreciation that the rubrics incorporated student perspectives by

looking at what students should be doing and what effective implementation and culturally relevant teaching can look like from the student perspective as opposed to just the focal point on the teacher and the lesson prep that goes into it. (Coaching session, March 31, 2023)

Acknowledging and emphasizing the student perspective through use of these rubrics also shifts power away from the teacher, and values student perspective and voice, which is a significant element of culturally responsive teaching.

Implications for Future Research

This study provides specific professional learning strategies to help increase teachers' for culturally responsive teaching practices, as well as introduce various strategies and practices that align with culturally responsive teaching. The use of peer coaching sessions aligned to specific topics to enhance culturally responsive teaching practices, followed by instructional round observations, allowed participants to engage in reflexivity of their own practice and collaborate with colleagues. Although this study had a small number of participants ($N = 2$), findings indicate this professional learning program would be effective in larger groups. Additionally, this program could be modified to apply to other content areas in secondary education; the coaching sessions can be tailored to other content areas other than social studies. This professional learning could also occur over a longer period of time, conducting instructional round observations throughout the year to observe implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices, while coaching sessions could focus on teachers' self-efficacy.

The focus of this study was on teachers' self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching practices; however, future research could focus on the impact on student learning.

Future research could draw on student experience and perceptions of teachers' culturally responsive teaching practices. While the culturally responsive teaching rubrics (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2021) utilized during instructional round observations included student actions, the coaching sessions and debrief of instructional round observations were focused on teacher actions. Future research focused on impact on student learning would

examine connections between teachers' self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching practices and student learning.

Recommendations for Future Practice

This study examined the effectiveness of peer coaching and instructional round observations as a professional development strategy for increasing teachers' self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching strategies. As noted by Bolgatz (2005), many White teachers are afraid to introduce or allow conversations about race to take place in their classrooms; this professional development program examines current practices already utilized by teachers while also providing teachers with specific strategies to implement and modeling them through peer coaching. The use of instructional round observations guided by culturally responsive rubrics that identify specific teacher and student actions provides concrete examples of strategies or practices to implement in the classroom. In addition to providing specific strategies and practices to enhance teachers' cultural responsiveness, this program also increases self-efficacy for implementing those practices.

If school leadership is looking for effective professional development tools to help guide teachers through increasing self-efficacy for enhancing culturally responsive teaching practices, this program proved extremely effective. The use of instructional rounds in education has become more common (Fowler-Finn, 2013) while peer coaching offers the opportunity for teachers to engage in self-reflection to examine current practices and share ideas and strategies (Donegan et al., 2000). The combination of these two strategies allows teachers to collaborate with their colleagues and observe implementation of strategies and practices discussed in peer-coaching sessions. As discussed by the participants in this study, they felt that the small-group environment allowed them to feel comfortable collaborating and that their experience was

acknowledged and valued; the use of modeling of specific strategies also provided clear examples of how to implement those strategies in their classrooms. Participants expressed an appreciation for the clarity of this program and opportunities for reflection and collaboration, which they felt do not exist in similar professional development opportunities currently offered by this context.

Based on the findings of this study, my recommendation to school leadership would be to offer professional development opportunities that highlight collaboration, time for reflection, and peer coaching. Acknowledging current practices allows teachers to feel valued and respected while peer coaching offers opportunities for collaboration and enhancing current practices. The use of rubrics specifically designed to include both teacher and student actions allowed the instructional round observations to have a specific focus, as opposed to open-ended observations that the participants described as feeling overwhelming. Overall, this study found that smaller-group settings where the participants have pre-established relationships helped establish a comfortable environment where collaboration was encouraged and valued.

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Appendix A

Needs Assessment Survey Questionnaire

Q1.1 By completing this survey or questionnaire, you are consenting to be in this research study. Your participation is voluntary, and you can stop at any time.

Demographic Questions

Q2.1 Grade Level(s) you currently teach

Q2.2 How many years have you been teaching?

Q2.3 How many years have you taught in this school (or district)?

Q2.4 How do identify? (select all that apply)

American Indian or Alaska Native (1)

Asian (2)

Black or African American (3)

Hispanic or Latino (4)

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (5)

White (6)

Middle Eastern or North African (7)

Race and Ethnicity Not Defined (8)

Safe Spaces Questionnaire (Holley & Steiner, 2005)

Q3.1 How important do you think it is to create a classroom environment where students may honestly express their thoughts and opinions, even if they are controversial ones?

- Not important at all (1)
- A little bit important (2)
- Moderately important (3)
- Very important (4)
- Extremely important (5)

Q3.2 Does a classroom environment where students honestly express their thoughts and opinions and share personal experiences change what you learn?

No (skip next question) (1)

Yes (2)

Q3.3 If you answered yes to the previous question, what did you learn in such an environment that you didn't learn in other classroom environments?

Q3.4 Does a classroom environment where students honestly express their thoughts and opinions change how much you learn?

No (skip next question) (1)

Yes (2)

Q3.5 If you answered yes to the previous question, do you feel you learned more or less than in other class environments?

More (1)

Less (2)

Q3.6 Do you feel that you are more or less challenged academically in classrooms where students are able to honestly express their thoughts and opinions?

More (1)

Same (2)

Less (3)

Q3.7 Do you feel that you are more or less challenged in terms of **personal growth and self-awareness** in classrooms where students are able to honestly express their thoughts and opinions?

More (1)

Same (2)

Less (3)

Culturally Responsive Teaching Techniques (Oyerinde, 2008)

Q4.1 Please answer the following questions as they relate to your teaching students.

Q4.2 Please select the most appropriate option for each statement.

	Nothing (1)	Very Little (2)	Some (3)	Quite A Bit (4)	A Great Deal (5)
I provide students with examples and materials, which reflect different cultures other than their own. (1)	<input type="radio"/>				
I employ a variety of teaching styles to meet the learning needs of all students. (2)	<input type="radio"/>				
My teaching techniques help students to view concepts, issues, themes, and problems from diverse ethnic and cultural perspectives. (3)	<input type="radio"/>				

I have a system in place to help students develop more positive racial attitudes and values. (4)

I support restructuring of the culture and organization of my school so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and gender groups will experience equality. (5)

Q4.3 To what extent do you use the following teaching methods?

	Nothing (1)	Very Little (2)	Some (3)	Quite A Bit (4)	A Great Deal (5)
Lecture (1)	<input type="radio"/>				
Group Discussion (2)	<input type="radio"/>				
Cooperative Learning or Small Group (3)	<input type="radio"/>				
Team Teaching with Another Teacher (4)	<input type="radio"/>				
Videos/DVDs (5)	<input type="radio"/>				
Textbook (6)	<input type="radio"/>				

Confidence Level ()



Q5.2 Assess students' behaviors with the knowledge that acceptable school behaviors may not match those that are acceptable within a student's home culture

Q5.3 Use culturally responsive discipline practices to alter the behavior of a student who is being defiant

Q5.4 Create a learning environment that conveys respect for the cultures of all students in my classroom

Q5.5 Use my knowledge of students' cultural backgrounds to create a culturally compatible learning environment

Q5.6 Establish high behavioral expectations that encourages students to produce high quality work

Q5.7 Clearly communicate classroom policies

Q5.8 Structure the learning environment so that all students feel like a valued member of the learning community

Q5.9 Use what I know about my students' cultural background to develop an effective learning environment

Q5.10 Encourage students to work together on classroom tasks, when appropriate

Q5.11 Design the classroom in a way that communicates respect for diversity

Q5.12 Use strategies that will hold students accountable for producing high quality work

Q5.13 Address inappropriate behavior without relying on traditional methods of discipline such as office referrals

- Q5.14 Critically analyze students' classroom behavior from a cross-cultural perspective
- Q5.15 Modify lesson plans so that students remain actively engaged throughout the entire class period or lesson
- Q5.16 Redirect students' behavior without the use of coercive means (i.e., consequences or verbal reprimand)
- Q5.17 Restructure the curriculum so that every child can succeed, regardless of their academic history
- Q5.18 Communicate with students using expressions that are familiar to them
- Q5.19 Personalize the classroom so that it is reflective of the cultural background of my students
- Q5.20 Establish routines for carrying out specific classroom tasks
- Q5.21 Design activities that require students to work together towards a common academic goal
- Q5.22 Modify the curriculum to allow students to work in groups
- Q5.23 Teach students how to work together
- Q5.24 Critically assess whether a particular behavior constitutes misbehavior
- Q5.25 Teach children self-management strategies that will assist them in regulating their classroom behavior
- Q5.26 Develop a partnership with parents from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds

Q5.27 Communicate with students' parents whose primary language is not English

Q5.28 Establish two-way communication with non-English speaking parents

Q5.29 Use culturally appropriate methods to relate to parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Q5.30 Model classroom routines for English Language Learners

Q5.31 Explain classroom rules so that they are easily understood by English Language Learners

Q5.32 Modify aspects of the classroom so that it matches aspects of students' home culture

Q5.33 Implement an intervention that minimizes a conflict that occurs when a students' culturally-based behavior is not consistent with school norms

Q5.34 Develop an effective classroom management plan based on my understanding of students' family background

Q5.35 Manage situations in which students are defiant

Q5.36 Prevent disruptions by recognizing potential causes for misbehavior

Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy (Siwatu, 2007)

Q6.1 Rate how confident you are in your ability to successfully accomplish each of the tasks listed below. Each task is related to teaching. Please rate your degree of confidence by recording

a number from 0 (no confidence at all) to 100 (completely confident). Remember that you may use any number between 0 and 100.

No Confidence		Moderately		Completely						
At All		Confident		Confident						
0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100

Confidence Level ()



Q6.2 Adapt instruction to meet the needs of my students.

Q6.3 Obtain information about my students' academic strengths

Q6.4 Determine whether my students like to work alone or in a group

Q6.5 Determine whether my students feel comfortable competing with other students

Q6.6 Identify ways that the school culture (e.g., values, norms, and practices) is different from my students' home culture.

Q6.7 Implement strategies to minimize the effects of the mismatch between my students' home culture and the school culture.

Q6.8 Assess student learning using various types of assessments.

Q6.9 Obtain information about my students' home life

Q6.10 Build a sense of trust in my students

Q6.11 Establish positive home-school relations.

Q6.12 Use a variety of teaching methods.

Q6.13 Develop a community of learners when my class consists of students from diverse backgrounds

Q6.14 Use my students' cultural background to help make learning meaningful.

Q6.15 Use my students' prior knowledge to help them make sense of new information.

Q6.16 Identify ways how students communicate at home may differ from the school norms.

Q6.17 Obtain information about my students' cultural background.

Q6.18 Teach students about their cultures' contributions to science.

Q6.19 Greet English Language Learners with a phrase in their native language.

- Q6.20 Design a classroom environment using displays that reflects a variety of cultures
- Q6.21 Develop a personal relationship with my students.
- Q6.22 Obtain information about my students' academic weaknesses.
- Q6.23 Praise English Language Learners for their accomplishments using a phrase in their native language.
- Q6.24 Identify ways that standardized tests may be biased towards linguistically diverse students.
- Q6.25 Communicate with parents regarding their child's educational progress.
- Q6.26 Structure parent-teacher conferences so that the meeting is not intimidating for parents.
- Q6.27 Help students to develop positive relationships with their classmates.
- Q6.28 Revise instructional material to include a better representation of cultural groups.
- Q6.29 Critically examine the curriculum to determine whether it reinforces negative cultural stereotypes.
- Q6.30 Design a lesson that shows how other cultural groups have made use of mathematics.
- Q6.31 Model classroom tasks to enhance English Language Learner's understanding.
- Q6.32 Communicate with the parents of English Language Learners regarding their child's achievement.
- Q6.33 Help students feel like important members of the classroom.
- Q6.34 Identify ways that standardized tests may be biased towards culturally diverse students.
- Q6.35 Use a learning preference inventory to gather data about how my students like to learn.
- Q6.36 Use examples that are familiar to students from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Q6.37 Explain new concepts using examples that are taken from my students' everyday lives

Q6.38 Obtain information regarding my students' academic interests.

Q6.39 Use the interests of my students to make learning meaningful for them.

Q6.40 Implement cooperative learning activities for those students who like to work in groups.

Q6.41 Design instruction that matches my students' developmental needs.

Q6.42 Teach students about their cultures' contributions to society.

Appendix B

Needs Assessment Interview Protocol

Thank you for your participation today. My name is Jess Nagourney and I am a doctoral student at Johns Hopkins University. Thank you for completing the survey, and this follow-up interview will take about 20 minutes and include 3 questions and potential follow-up questions. I would like your permission to audio record this interview, so I may accurately document your responses. I assure you that all your comments will remain confidential. I will be compiling a report which will contain all comments without any reference to individuals.

If at any time during the interview you wish to discontinue the use of the recorder or the interview itself, please feel free to let me know. All of your responses are confidential; your responses will remain confidential and will be used to develop a better understanding of how your understanding of race and racism influences your decisions about what to teach and how to teach in your social studies classes. The purpose of this study is to understand how individual teachers' understanding of race and racism influences their decisions about what to teach and how to teach in social studies classes. To understand these factors, I am interviewing social studies teachers in our school who volunteer to participate in this study.

At this time I would like to remind you of your written consent to participate in this study. You and I have both signed and dated each copy, certifying that we agree to continue this interview. You will receive one copy and I will keep the other under lock and key, separate from your reported responses. You may withdraw your participation at any time without consequence. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin? Then with your permission, we will begin the interview.

Name of Interviewee: _____

Date of Interview: _____

1. How do you create a safe classroom space for your students?
 - a. Follow-Up:
 - i. Can you provide specific examples of strategies you use?
 - ii. Have you ever had an experience where a student did not feel safe?
 - iii. If so, how did you know? How did you handle that situation? Why do you think that student did not feel safe?
 - iv. What do you think are the 3 most important strategies in creating a safe classroom space?

2. Do you think it is your role as a social studies teacher to address issues of race and racism in your classroom?
 - a. Follow-Up:
 - i. Do you feel you appropriately acknowledge address race and racism in your classes? (both in content and current events)
 - ii. If yes, what strategies do you use?
 - iii. If no, where do you see room for improvement?
 - iv. What strategies do you use to incorporate these topics in your classroom?
 - v. Do you feel comfortable addressing race and racism in your classes?
 - vi. If you do not, what makes you uncomfortable?

3. What instructional strategies do you use to incorporate culturally responsive teaching?
 - a. Follow-Up:
 - i. How do you understand culturally responsive teaching?
 - ii. Have you had success with utilizing culturally responsive teaching strategies?
 1. If yes, how do you know?
 2. If no, what do you see as room for improvement?
 - iii. Do you feel that the district offers adequate Professional Development for enhancing culturally responsive teaching?
 1. If yes, what is an example of a PD that successfully addressed culturally responsive teaching practices?
 2. If no, what do you think the district should focus on?

Appendix C

Intervention Pre-Interview Protocol

Thank you for your participation today. My name is Jess Nagourney and I am a doctoral student at Johns Hopkins University. Thank you for your participation in my pilot study program and interviews. This interview consists of three questions, plus additional follow-up questions, and should take no longer than 20 minutes. I would like your permission to audio record this interview so I may accurately document your responses. I assure you that all comments will remain confidential. I will be compiling a report which will contain all comments without any reference to individuals.

If at any time during the interview you wish to discontinue the use of the recorder or the interview itself, please feel free to let me know. All of your responses are confidential; your responses will remain confidential and will be used to develop a better understanding of effective professional learning opportunities to guide teachers in developing increased self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching. The purpose of this study is to increase social studies teachers' self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching strategies within their classrooms.

At this time, I would like to remind you of your written consent to participate in this study. You and I have both signed and dated each copy, certifying that we agree to continue this interview. You will receive one copy and I will keep the other under lock and key, separate from your reported responses. You may withdraw your participation at any time without consequence. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin? Then with your permission, we will begin the interview.

Name of Interviewee: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Interview Questions:

1. Do you think your identity influences the choices you make while teaching?
Follow-Up Questions (optional)
 - a. How would you define your identity?
 - b. Do you explicitly discuss your identity with your students? If so, how?
 - c. Do you think you approach specific topics differently because of your identity?
 - d. Are there topics you try to avoid because of your identity?
 - e. How would you describe the identities of your students?

2. Whose voice/perspective is valued in education?

Follow-Up Questions (optional)

- a. What can students contribute to classroom learning?
- b. What knowledge can students provide in the classroom?
- c. Are certain types of knowledge prioritized over others? If so, which ones and why?
- d. Do you see evidence of systemic racism in the education system? If so, can you provide examples?

3. How do you teach about race and racism in your classroom?

Follow-Up Questions (optional)

- a. How do you define race and racism?
- b. Do you think colorblindness and race-evasion are issues in schools? If so, how do you see them?
- c. Do you explicitly address race and racism in your classrooms? If so, how?

Appendix D

Intervention Post-Interview Protocol

Thank you for your participation today. My name is Jess Nagourney and I am a doctoral student at Johns Hopkins University. Thank you for your participation in my pilot study program and interviews. This interview consists of three questions, plus additional follow-up questions, and should take no longer than 20 minutes. I would like your permission to audio record this interview so I may accurately document your responses. I assure you that all comments will remain confidential. I will be compiling a report which will contain all comments without any reference to individuals.

If at any time during the interview you wish to discontinue the use of the recorder or the interview itself, please feel free to let me know. All of your responses are confidential; your responses will remain confidential and will be used to develop a better understanding of effective professional learning opportunities to guide teachers in developing increased self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching. The purpose of this study is to increase social studies teachers' self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching strategies within their classrooms.

At this time, I would like to remind you of your written consent to participate in this study. You and I have both signed and dated each copy, certifying that we agree to continue this interview. You will receive one copy and I will keep the other under lock and key, separate from your reported responses. You may withdraw your participation at any time without consequence. Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin? Then with your permission, we will begin the interview.

Name of Interviewee: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Interview Questions:

1. How would you describe culturally responsive teaching?
 - a. Are there specific culturally responsive teaching strategies that you currently use in your classroom? If so, please describe.
2. Do you feel confident in your ability to incorporate culturally responsive teaching strategies in your classroom? Why or why not?
 - a. Can you share an example of a specific strategy that you feel has worked well in your classroom?
 - b. Can you share an example of a specific strategy that you feel has been a challenge to incorporate in your classroom? Have you tried to incorporate this strategy? If so, what was the result?

- c. Are there specific topics you feel uncomfortable with discussing in your classroom? Why?
- 3. Do you think your understanding of culturally responsive teaching has changed as a result of your participation in this pilot study? Provide examples.
 - a. Do you understand culturally responsive teaching differently as a result of your participation in this pilot study? If so, how?
 - b. Do you feel your participation in this pilot study provided new insights related to culturally responsive teaching? If so, what new insights?

Appendix E

Coaching Sessions Lesson Plan

Session 1 – Self-Reflection about Identity

<p>Guiding question for session</p>	<p>How do teachers' identities influence our choices in the classroom?</p>
<p>Discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What role do you think your identity plays in the way you teach? • Do you feel your teacher preparation adequately prepared you to teach in this context? <p>“Being more self-conscious and analytical about one’s own identity and how one’s socialization shapes their teaching beliefs and behaviors.” (Gay & Kirkland, 2003)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does this mean to you?
<p>Activity 1</p>  <p>The diagram is a circular wheel divided into several concentric rings. The outermost ring is labeled 'MARGINALIZED' and includes terms like 'Dark skin colour', 'Formal Education', 'High School Education', 'Some disability', 'Gay men', 'Women of color', 'Immigrants', 'Linguistic minorities', 'Rural', 'Homeless', 'Large Body size', 'Mental Health', 'Vulnerable', 'Elderly', 'Disability', 'LGBTQ+', 'Sexual', 'Women of color', 'Immigrants', 'Linguistic minorities', 'Rural', 'Homeless', 'Large Body size', 'Mental Health', 'Vulnerable', 'Elderly', 'Disability', 'LGBTQ+', 'Sexual'. The inner rings include 'POWER', 'Rich', 'Middle class', 'Learned English', 'English', 'Citizenship', 'Undocumented', 'Different', 'White', 'Able bodied', 'Heterosexual', 'Gay men', 'Women of color', 'Immigrants', 'Linguistic minorities', 'Rural', 'Homeless', 'Large Body size', 'Mental Health', 'Vulnerable', 'Elderly', 'Disability', 'LGBTQ+', 'Sexual'. The center of the wheel is labeled 'POWER'. At the bottom, it says 'Adapted from ccrweb.ca' and '@syriaaduckworth'.</p>	<p>Wheel of Power/Privilege</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe your identity? • Choose 1 wedge per layer that describes your identity
<p>Activity 2</p>	<p>How does Whiteness manifest in schools?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How might the system of education, curriculum, and your own practice perpetuate this (consciously or unconsciously)? • Can you think of any examples? • How can we, as educators, work to undo these systems of Whiteness, especially in the classroom? • Brainstorm 1-2 ideas that we could bring into our classrooms → share out specific examples
<p>Prep for instructional round observation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce Interpersonal culturally responsive teaching rubric (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2021) • Ask participants too look over indicators, teacher actions, and student actions • Identify 1-2 actions for teacher and student that you want to implement

Session 2 – Racial Literacy

Instructional round debrief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you observe during the instructional round observations? • Identify items from the rubric to support your observations
Guiding question for session	How does racism operate within our school and the content we teach?
Discussion	<p>Definitions: Colorblindness & Racial Literacy → ask participants to define first</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Colorblindness</u>: When teachers actively ignore ‘seeing’ race to promote instead a ‘neutral’ approach (Frankenberg, 1997; Galman et al., 2010; Leonardo, 2008) • <u>Racial Literacy</u>: “achieving racial literacy enables people to understand that the way race is defined can change and is highly malleable based on geographic and temporal considerations” (King et al., 2018)
Activity	<p>LET’S ACT Framework (King et al., 2018)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 steps to help social studies teachers • Develop students’ racial literacy skills in the classroom • Specifically used to explore controversial topics <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Love & Listen</u>: Create safe space for students to explore controversial, racialized topics; Love your students & view them as experts; Acknowledge the power dynamic (student-teacher); Listen to student’s stories & experiences (ex: storytelling) 2. <u>Enlighten & Educate</u>: Review norms for class discussions; Remind students what to do if they feel stressed, overwhelmed, etc.; Use diverse sources & perspectives, but acknowledge students’ knowledge and experiences. 3. <u>Talk</u>: Facilitate a lesson that allows students to engage with each other but do not force them to take a stance yet; Ask students to evaluate the validity of the evidence provided (analyze biases of the various perspectives) 4. <u>Scribe</u>: Give students (and teachers) time to write and critically reflect on the conversation/activity 5. <u>Analyze systems</u>: Guide students through analysis of how race exists in systems and how certain groups have privilege while others are marginalized; “Tip of the iceberg” (Colin Kaepernick) vs. “deeper issue” (racial injustice); <i>How can teachers help students understand and analyze systemic racism?</i> 6. <u>Conclude through deliberation</u>: Allow students to think about their own beliefs (deliberation); The teacher can

	<p>pose a specific question that students can directly respond to but ask them to create an argument supported by evidence</p> <p>7. <u>Take Action</u>: Give students the opportunity to brainstorm an action plan based on what they determined in the previous step; Become informed actors!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think of a controversial topic you already discuss in your classroom → How can you reframe to use the LET’S ACT framework?
Prep for instructional round observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce Instruction culturally responsive teaching rubric (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2021) • Ask participants too look over indicators, teacher actions, and student actions • Identify 1-2 actions for teacher and student that you want to implement

Session 3 – Decentering Whiteness

Instructional round debrief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you observe during the instructional round observations? • Identify items from the rubric to support your observations
Guiding question for session	How can we as educators decenter Whiteness in social studies classrooms?
Discussion	<p>How do we see Whiteness in education?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>System of Education</u>: Whose knowledge is valued? Who holds positions of power? • <u>Schools</u>: Rules/policies; Discipline • <u>Classrooms</u>: Content; Class “norms”
Activity	<p>How can we work to decenter Whiteness?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of current systems (highlighting the role of Whiteness)? • Analyze current systems → are there different experiences for individuals based on their racial identity? • How can we acknowledge those different experiences? • <i>How can we guide students through “engag[ing] in a collective effort to understand the operating principles of structural White supremacy?” (Smalling et al., 2022, p. 608)</i>

	<p><u>Practice:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify one piece of content that you teach that centers Whiteness (concept, event, individuals, etc.) • How could you shift the focus away from Whiteness, while still calling attention to the role that Whiteness plays?
Prep for instructional round observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce Content culturally responsive teaching rubric (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2021) • Ask participants too look over indicators, teacher actions, and student actions • Identify 1-2 actions for teacher and student that you want to implement

Session 4 – Centering Knowledge Systems from Communities of Color

Instructional round debrief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you observe during the instructional round observations? • Identify items from the rubric to support your observations
Guiding question for session	How can we incorporate and center the knowledge our students contribute?
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways do teachers value student knowledge? • How do you incorporate student knowledge into your classroom? <p>Definition → Students’ funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask participants to define first • Knowledge students can bring into the classroom from their personal and home lives • What are the benefits of incorporating students’ funds of knowledge in the classroom?
Activity	<p>How can we actively integrate students’ funds of knowledge?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you think of a lesson or activity where you could center students’ knowledge? • What knowledge might your students have that is learned from outside the classroom? • How can we acknowledge students’ contributions and make them feel valued? <p><u>Practice:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify one lesson or activity that could be reframed to center students’ knowledge • What would you change?

Reflect	<p>Consider the following quote</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we develop “antiracist stances against curricular violence, cultural erasure, dehumanizing school discipline, racist policies, and other forms of oppression that prevent Students of Color from experiencing joyful and affirming learning experiences” (Carter Andrews, 2021)? • Discuss
Prep for instructional round observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce Culture culturally responsive teaching rubric (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2021) • Ask participants to look over indicators, teacher actions, and student actions • Identify 1-2 actions for teacher and student that you want to implement

Appendix F

Culturally Responsive Teaching Rubrics (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2021)

Culturally Responsive Teaching Rubric: Look Fors - Interpersonal

Category	Indicator	Teacher Actions to Look For	Student Actions to Look For
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Interpersonal</u></p> <p>The observable relationships and social dynamics that exist between the teacher and their students, as well as the relationships that exist between the students and their peers</p>	<p>Teachers and students are attuned to their strengths, gaps, and biases, and respond to them in constructive ways</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers admit when they made a mistake and/or need help <input type="checkbox"/> The teacher challenges students to confront and deconstruct their own assumptions and biases <input type="checkbox"/> The teacher encourages students to explore alternative or divergent perspectives and points of view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Students admit when they made a mistake and/or, need help <input type="checkbox"/> Students cooperate with each other and leverage each other's strengths <input type="checkbox"/> Students constructively challenge their own, each other's, and the teacher's assumptions and biases
	<p>Mutual respect and healthy boundaries are established amongst and across all students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher encourages students to work with each other and to partner with a variety of students <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers calls attention to and affirms healthy demonstrations of teamwork and collaboration <input type="checkbox"/> The teacher models and can be seen as an exemplar of having healthy relationships with students and even their own colleagues, e.g. observations of co-teacher relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Students are collaborative and engage with each other in respectful and productive ways <input type="checkbox"/> Students intently listen to their classmates, do not interrupt them while speaking, respond to and build on their classmates contributions <input type="checkbox"/> Students are supportive of one another and affirm the contributions of their teammates
	<p>Mutual respect and healthy boundaries are established between the teacher and all students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher's demeanor is warm; the teacher can be seen smiling and expressing a range of verbal and nonverbal signs of endearment <input type="checkbox"/> There are signs of healthy bonds and equitable relationships between the teacher and the students, and the teacher creates opportunities for the students to feel safe and positively express themselves <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers use language that is empowering and affirming to all identities and members of the classroom community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Students use language that is empowering and affirming to all identities and members of the classroom community <input type="checkbox"/> Students share their gratitude with their teacher and their peers; they articulate the things or moments that they appreciate about the lesson and their experience <input type="checkbox"/> Students appear to be safe and can be seen fully and positively expressing themselves to their teacher

Culturally Responsive Teaching Rubric: Look Fors - Culture

Category	Indicator	Teacher Actions to Look For	Student Actions to Look For
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Culture</u></p> <p>The classroom's climate and environment include observable artifacts, rituals and routines, and structures that promote inclusion and safety</p>	<p>The classroom environment is culturally and socially affirming to students' identities and brings awareness to global diversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The teacher visibly and prominently displays artifacts that are reflective of and affirming to students' identities <input type="checkbox"/> The teacher has arranged their classroom in a manner that promotes collaboration and cooperation, e.g. desks are in groups or pods <input type="checkbox"/> The teacher has arranged the classroom in a manner that allows for materials and resources to be equitably accessible to all students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Student desks and work spaces are free of distractions and arranged in ways that aid learning and maximize attention and focus <input type="checkbox"/> Students can be heard interacting with the displayed artifacts and student work <input type="checkbox"/> Students demonstrate a sense of ownership and pride over the classroom space
	<p>Rituals and routines are affirming, purposeful, and promote both community and independence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers use language that is affirming to all students and positively reinforces their belief in them <input type="checkbox"/> The teacher articulates the purpose of the ritual and routine and its role in driving learning forward <input type="checkbox"/> The rituals and routines are equitable and accessible to all students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Students have internalized routines and they are efficiently and seamlessly executed <input type="checkbox"/> Students can be seen enthusiastically leading rituals and routines <input type="checkbox"/> Students engage with the classroom's rituals and routines pridefully and purposefully
	<p>Expectations are co-constructed with a diverse group of stakeholders; they are ambitious, asset based, clear, and widely practiced in classroom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher uses positive and reinforcing language to encourage students <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher directs students to give their classmates complete attention when they are sharing <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher affirms and adjusts behaviors that meets or fall short of the classroom expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Majority of the students have internalized the expectations and consistently demonstrate and uphold them <input type="checkbox"/> Students operate with a sentence of shared purpose and agency <input type="checkbox"/> There are minimal to no distractions and time on task is sustained over long periods of time

Culturally Responsive Teaching Rubric: Look Fors - Instruction

Category	Indicator	Teacher Actions to Look For	Student Actions to Look For
<p><u>Instruction</u></p> <p>The teacher's practice and the observable strategies they employ to facilitate learning and push and extend student thinking</p>	<p>The teacher demonstrates depth and breadth of the lesson and is able to contextualize it in students' identities, experiences, and abilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The teacher makes the lesson accessible by including relevant and current media, phenomena, geographic and community reference points that are familiar and known by students <input type="checkbox"/> The teacher views students' life experiences as assets and builds on students' cultural and linguistic knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher anticipates common student misunderstandings and ensures strategies are in place to overcome those misconceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Students regularly share input and feedback using personalized experiences, which provide windows into their worlds <input type="checkbox"/> Students are able to establish connections between historical context and their current lives, as well as across disciplines <input type="checkbox"/> Students are engaged with the content and motivated to share their pieces of their identity with their peers
	<p>Students have opportunities to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The teacher uses a variety of instructional techniques to scaffold, accommodate, and modify the lesson to meet the needs of a diverse learning community <input type="checkbox"/> The teacher conducts frequent checks for student understanding and adjusts instruction accordingly <input type="checkbox"/> The teacher has planned a variety of standards and objective aligned assignments for their students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Students make academic choices and are seen selecting assignment of their preference <input type="checkbox"/> Students are observed engaged in uninterrupted work for a significant portion of the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Students are engaged with a variety of materials, manipulatives and/or media
	<p>Students have opportunities to engage in discourse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher employs a variety of high ratio moves to push and extend student thinking and deepen their understanding <input type="checkbox"/> The teacher facilitated or created the structure(s) for discussion to occur and for students to share and respond to each other's diverse perspectives <input type="checkbox"/> The teacher constantly seeks input/feedback from students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Students challenge the ideas in a text and explore and share alternative viewpoints <input type="checkbox"/> Students respectfully disagree with each other and defend their arguments with evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Students have opportunities to contribute, inform, or persuade their peers on a topic

Culturally Responsive Teaching Rubric: Look Fors - Content

Category	Indicator	Teacher Actions to Look For	Student Actions to Look For
<p><u>Content</u></p> <p>The subject matter that students are engaging with, and the substance of the materials that students are analyzing and discussing</p>	<p>Students engage with relevant content that centers issues of equity, power, race, and identity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The teacher refers to relevant, real world, and community-based context and occurrences <input type="checkbox"/> The teacher encourages students to examine and discuss examples and occurrences of stereotypes and biases <input type="checkbox"/> Students are encouraged to challenge the ideas in a text and to think at high levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Students are discussing global and communal issues of (in)equity and social justice and exploring different viewpoints <input type="checkbox"/> Students use critical, content specific vocabulary accurately and within the context to articulate their learning <input type="checkbox"/> Students respectfully disagree with one another and provide evidence to support their views
	<p>Lesson is aligned to common core state standards and includes rigorous tasks that are cognitively demanding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The teacher communicates and routinely refers to the lesson's objectives and essential questions <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher develops and/or uses appropriately demanding instructional materials, such as texts, questions, problems, exercises and assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher delivers lesson content clearly, accurately, and with coherence; no inaccurate information is conveyed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Students spend majority of the lesson/observation thinking, i.e. reading, writing, or talking about the lesson's objectives <input type="checkbox"/> Students convey understanding of key concepts and themes in the discipline <input type="checkbox"/> Students independently connect lesson content to real world situations
	<p>The content itself is reflective of and affirming to students' identities, brings awareness to global diversity, and it allows for students to interrogate the presented information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The teacher creates and/or selects fact and opinion-based materials that invite students to offer counter perspectives <input type="checkbox"/> The teacher creates and/or selects materials that involve and value diverse student identities <input type="checkbox"/> The teacher creates and/or selects materials that showcase sensitive/difficult content in justice-oriented ways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Students are asking thoughtful questions, appear to feel safe, and are confidently sharing their opinions and perspectives <input type="checkbox"/> Students are actively engaged with the content and not visibly distracted or appearing to lack motivation <input type="checkbox"/> Students engage with difficult and sensitive content in constructive and non-offensive ways; their discourse honors the experiences and identities of their peers

Appendix G

Codebook

Code	Description	Examples
Power	Discussions of power in the classroom (student v. teacher), and awareness of individual identity and power	<p>“How does that make you feel like a first step in starting to exactly these, these issues and whiteness in schools? And who has power and who doesn't?”</p> <p>“don't think I became more aware of my biases and my privilege and my power those things until working here for a good amount of years”</p> <p>“well a white educator, I'm going to do X, Y, and Z to fix racism in schools, we're still perpetuating whiteness, because the ideas are still coming from us, as opposed to a collaborative or even entirely being led by educators who are at least more marginalized groups”</p>
Self-Awareness	Being aware of your own identity and the impact it has on your teaching	<p>“I think it's kind of because you need to be aware of yourself and your identity to give that back to the students”</p> <p>“I consider myself a able bodied heterosis, heterosexual cisgender white male...but I'm trying to in 2023 become aware that all of these things are a benefit for me and they do give me give me power and be aware of that in my next</p>

		my teaching but my opinions on everyday life and everyday issues”
Established relationships	Pre-existing relationships between participants and researcher	<p>“I found it very engaging part of it might be because it was a small group. I didn’t feel like I was being talked to I felt like it was definitely a dialogue and a conversation”</p> <p>“Being able to have a dialogue with colleagues and also with colleagues in leadership positions, I felt like really helped me stay engaged”</p>
Time to reflect	Reflection time during coaching sessions	“...we never got any help or any ideas of how to actually address those issues within our classroom”
Clarity of Objectives	Objectives of coaching sessions clearly articulated	<p>“I always walked away from our long sessions feeling really confused, not understanding what the objective was, and had zero idea of how to actually implement anything into my classroom”</p> <p>“It really helped me understand what that should look like, and then even having more small group discussions where teachers feel comfortable with each other and there seems to be a more effective and direct objective of what we’re talking about each day”</p>
Student Engagement	Level of student engagement during instructional round observations	“Looking at what students should be doing and what effective implementation and culturally relevant

		<p>teaching can look like from the student perspective as opposed to just the focal point on the teacher and the lesson prep that goes into it”</p> <p>“how can we better frame that to make it a whole class discussion and really, again, empower students who are you know, they're always very interested in the topic are always very engaged”</p>
Valuing Student Knowledge	Acknowledging and valuing student” prior knowledge	<p>“you can make it known that you're interested in what the students have to say and they're now their background knowledge and stuff like that something like simple question at the beginning of the period likes are what before we get into it, what are we what are you guys already know about this? I want to hear that even just language like tell me what you know. It's valuable to what you already have”</p>
Critical Thinking Skills	Skills to engage students in critical thinking	<p>“we do try to talk when you think about this, without picking aside yet - is this right? Is this wrong?”</p> <p>“had the diverse perspectives for the students to really consider”</p>
Self-Reflection	Engaging in self-reflection about identity to	<p>“I consider myself an able bodied heterosis,</p>

	understand pedagogical choices	<p>heterosexual cisgender white male...I'm trying to in 2023 become aware that all of these things are a benefit for me and they do give me give me power and be aware of that in my next my teaching but my opinions on everyday life and everyday issues”</p> <p>“not just being reflective but like looking at the different categories and saying okay, like what are you doing? To either marginalized or silence by accident or on purpose, the outer layers or what are you doing to further include those, especially when it's a layer that you know, you don't feel a part of?”</p>
Racial Literacy Skills	understand and engage in conversations about race as a social construction, as well as the long-term and immediate effects of systemic racism	<p>“...acknowledge that there are different barriers that different cultures and races faiths, especially in the United States”</p> <p>“how I see my parents, aunts and uncles, but this idea of like, we're post racism because segregation is over. And I'm going to treat everyone the same and everyone's just equal and I'm not going to acknowledge race because if I acknowledge race, then that makes them racist. Just</p>

		<p>looking at everyone the same, while ignoring any cultural or ethnic differences that may exist.”</p> <p>“I think American societal, like norms are rooted in whiteness, we expect our societal norms to or I should say, if we expect our schools to reflect societal norms, then every set of policies are going to be rooted in whiteness”</p>
Strategies for Effective Teaching	Teacher actions in classrooms that have positive student outcomes	<p>“I liked the teacher actions give me during lesson but also are at least it seems like very cognizant of what the teacher can do before the lesson. So even idea of developing and creating Yeah, I think that it's a tangible action because sometimes you get rubrics like this because like, be culturally inclusive. It's like okay, but what does that mean”</p> <p>“the main purpose of doing these things and incorporating these aspects of teaching is not for the teachers. It's for the students”</p>
Decentering Whiteness	Analyzing ways in which Whiteness is enacted in education	“American societal norms are rooted in Whiteness, so we expect our societal norms, or I should say, we

		expect our schools to reflect societal norms, then every set of policies are going to be rooted in Whiteness”
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